THE MEN OF THE PAULINE CIRCLE

HERBERT S. SEBRINGS

Th
Bequ

(1) Under the terms
the property of
Smethwick Methodis
will, until further
Church premises at
Church.

(2) The various books f
the use of those La
appear on the
Smethwick-Broor
Street Circuits.

(3) Discretionary pow
Librarian, in collabc
Committee, to allow
covered by Rule 2
occasion.

(4) All Lay Preachers are asked to ma
use of the library, but emphasis is laid
the necessity of returning the book o
borrowed within three months.
incumbent on all who enjoy the privi
the library to observe this rule.

(5) In order to meet various expe
borrowers are requested to leave a
in the box provided for same.

(6) A card relating to each book
adjacent to the same and anyon
volume must write their nam
borrowing upon such card. A
replacing the book, the date of
must also be entered upon the

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN
GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/menofpaulinecirc0000herb

THE MEN OF THE PAULINE CIRCLE

THE MEN OF THE PAULINE CIRCLE

BY

HERBERT S. SEEKINGS

'He had a thousand friends, and loved each as his own soul, and seemed to live a thousand lives in them, and died a thousand deaths when he must quit them.'

NEWMAN.

London

CHARLES H. KELLY

25-35 CITY ROAD, AND 26 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

To
I. M. S.

First Edition 1914

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN
GRADUATE UNIVERSITY
BS
2440
S451
1914

FOREWORD

ALTHOUGH some of the characters dealt with in these pages do not fall within that category, this is really a book on the friendships of St. Paul. Dr. Hugh Black, in his *University Sermons*, makes the somewhat remarkable confession that he never remembers having heard a sermon on the apostle's genius for friendship. Be that as it may, there are scattered throughout our expository literature many excellent studies of the more distinguished of his friends. But the obscure, despite the undoubted interest many of them possess, have been strangely overlooked. My object has been to bring together and classify in this volume the men of whom anything definite is known who, by personal choice or the accidents of office, came into association with him.

The reader will see how difficult it has been to deal with the greater characters within the limits of a short chapter; and he will understand that some particular feature of each character has been dwelt upon to the partial ignoring of minor traits, which might otherwise have been repeated in the various sketches.

As I have ventured here and there to express an opinion at variance with those held by leading scholars, I desire to acknowledge gratefully my indebtedness to their books for many things to which no reference has been made.

17304

Perhaps I ought to add that these studies are not sermons, although they appear in homiletic form, They are intended for Bible-class students and young preachers. H. S. S.

Harrogate, 1914.

CONTENTS

GROUP I. THE DISTINGUISHED

I. PAUL: THE INTENSE 11
II. LUKE: THE COMPANIONABLE . . 23
III. BARNABAS: THE DISCERNING . . 33
IV. MARK: THE UNSTABLE . . . 43
V. TIMOTHY: THE UNSELFISH . . 53
VI. TITUS: THE CONCILIATOR . . . 65
VII. SILAS: THE EDIFIER 75
VIII. STEPHEN: THE CONFESSOR . . 85
IX. AQUILA: THE GRACIOUS . . . 97
X. APOLLOS: THE APOLOGIST . . . 107
XI. PHILEMON: THE MERCIFUL . . 117

GROUP II. THE OBSCURE

XII. ANANIAS: THE COMMISSIONED . . 127
XIII. TYCHICUS: THE MESSENGER . . 137
XIV. EPAPHRAS: THE SOLICITOUS . . 147
XV. EPAPHRODITUS: THE ENTHUSIAST . 157
XVI. ONESIPHORUS: THE HOSPITABLE . 167
XVII. DIONYSIUS: THE OPEN-MINDED . . 175
XVIII. DEMAS: THE INCONSTANT . . . 183
XIX. HYMENAEUS: THE PERVERTER . . 191
XX. DEMETRIUS: THE SECULAR . . 201

GROUP III. THE OFFICIAL

XXI. GALLIO: THE HONOURABLE . . 211
XXII. LYSIAS: THE PROSAIC . . . 219
XXIII. FELIX: THE ENSLAVED . . . 229
XXIV. FESTUS: THE IMPULSIVE . . . 239
XXV. AGRIPPA: THE SUPERFICIAL . . 249

GROUP IV. THE UNKNOWN

XXVI. THE REST: THE UNRECORDED . . 259

GROUP I.

THE DISTINGUISHED

PAUL: THE INTENSE

The 'striking originality' of Paul's character is 'due to the fruitful combination in it of two spiritual forces, which are seldom found united in this degree in one personality—*dialectical power* and *religious inspiration*.' . . . Add to these attributes the apostle's heart of fire, the glow of passion and imagination which fused his mystical intuitions and logical apprehensions into one, his fine sensibility, his resolute will, his manly sincerity and courage and woman-like tenderness, his vivacity, subtlety, and humour, his rich humanity and keen faculty of moral observation, his adroitness and moral tact, his genius for organization and inborn power of command, and the vigorous and creative though not facile, gift of expression that supplied the fitting dress, as original as the thought behind it, with which his doctrine clothed itself—all these qualities and powers went to the making of Jesus Christ's apostle to the nations, the master-builder of the universal Church and of Christian theology.

DR. G. G. FINDLAY.

I

Paul: the Intense

When Fletcher, the saintly vicar of Madeley, died, it was discovered that he had left some manuscript lectures,[1] written in French, in which he extolled the apostle Paul as 'the true model for Christians and Pastors.' In his brief and, it is to be feared, forgotten chapters he selected those traits of the apostle's life and ministry which appealed to him as he read the Acts and the Pauline Epistles as having a direct bearing upon the Christian ministry, and his translator was ingenuous enough to interweave the story of Fletcher's own life between the lectures to show how nobly this eighteenth-century clergyman sought to embody in his own work the principles of the incomparable ministry of St. Paul. The idea appears almost foolishly daring—for who would care to have his own meagre attainments ranged beside so majestic an example?—until we remember that, his splendid genius notwithstanding, Paul became what he was in the service of the Church because of his utter consecration to the cause of the Evangel of all those personal gifts of his which had been enriched and perfected by the grace of God. Remember that, and, though the daring remains, the folly disappears. For not only in matters of experience and conduct, but also in those of service the lofty ideals to which he was never disloyal

[1] *The Portrait of St. Paul.*

hold out the healthful challenge to imitation, however far beyond our reach they may appear.

My poor spark had for its source the sun.

Among the features to which Fletcher calls attention there is one which in an outstanding degree designates the apostle—his entire devotion to Jesus Christ. It may be taken for granted that no solitary word can adequately describe the versatility of Paul ; but if it could, that word would be *devotion*. It is impossible to think of him apart from his absolute absorption in the things of the Kingdom of God, his eager enthusiasm for the advance of the Kingdom, and his ceaseless solicitude on the behalf of those whom he had gained for the Kingdom. Herein lies the marvel of St. Paul. He was a man of manifold attainments. Yet he mastered the secret of making them all converge to the one thing to which he had so completely committed his whole life. The germ of all his religious life and of all his apostolic ministry is contained in such a self-revealing word as this : *One thing I do*. He possessed many ideas, but one idea possessed him, and the man of boundless interests became the servant of one. And this to the end, for there was a glow even in his sunset. Age did not do for him what it does for so many ; it did not give him maturity of thought at the expense of fervour. Take his letters in their chronological sequence, and we are conscious of a development. We see him coming gradually into possession of fuller, vaster truth ; yet the growth is always, so to say, toward the centre. The more extensive truth becomes to him the more intensive

it becomes, and the further it stretches its borders the more certainly does it throw its weight upon that centre. The richer he becomes in knowledge the clearer do the fires of his zeal burn, and practically the last word we have from his pen is one of exultation over a deliverance which gave him renewed and unexpected opportunities for the fuller proclamation of the gospel. Thus to think of Paul is to think of devotion !

' His entire devotion to Jesus Christ.' But that is scarcely the starting-point for a study of his devotion. Paul was never anything other than a religious man, and there was always ardour in his religion. In the keen pupil sitting in the school of Gamaliel, in the stern Pharisee consenting to the martyrdom of Stephen, and in the fiery persecutor haling the saints to prison and to death, we find this same quality, employed, as he believed, in the service of God. He was ZEALOUS AS A PHARISEE, with *a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*[1] He had such fecundity of mind, such warmth of heart, such strength of will, and so deep-rooted was his genius for religion, so thorough his grasp of mighty principles, so complete his mastery over men, that had he chosen to remain a Pharisee he must have become foremost among its great rabbis ; and while it lay in the purpose of God that he should espouse the Christian cause and become the apostle to the Gentiles, one can but feel an underlying compassion for Judaism, for in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus it lost one who had been its enthusiastic servant, and would have been its most distinguished exponent. Had he continued in the old

[1] Rom. x. 2.

Faith, the history of the Christian Church would doubtless still have been a record of the triumph of grace; but it would have had to be written differently—how differently, happily, it is idle to speculate. *Ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and made havock of it; and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*[1] Thus Paul the Apostle on Saul the Pharisee!

But a crisis came in his religious history—*it was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal His Son in me*[2]—and thenceforth we trace His Zeal for Jesus Christ. Zeal is a gift of God, and God destroys none of His gifts. It matters not how much they may have been misused before, in conversion He directs them into their proper courses, and makes them a means for the spiritual enriching of the world. Let an electric current get out of control, and it becomes an agent of destruction; but the same power under restraint is of utmost value in the service of man. The injurious becomes useful when under the dominion of a higher power. So was it with the zeal of Saul. After the experience on the Damascus highway it was brought within the sway of the Spirit of God, and the passion of Paul the evangelist was but the zeal of the persecutor transfigured by heavenly grace and employed according to the will of God.

It was Paul's custom to regard himself as having been always within the sphere of the divine purpose.

[1] Gal. i. 13, 14. [2] Gal. i. 15, 16.

He had been set apart from his birth for some beneficent end.[1] But what the nature of that purpose was he never knew until he made the ravishing discovery that Jesus was the Christ. Richard Watson Gilder has said :

> If Jesus Christ is a man—
> And only a man—I say,
> That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
> And to Him will I cleave alway.

But Paul could not say that. So long as he regarded Him as ' only a man ' His divine claim had sounded as blasphemy, and instead of cleaving he must persecute ; but when he knew Him as God antagonism was at an end, and conversion was a natural consequent. Paul, even in his most rapturous moods, never sentimentalized about Jesus. Jesus to him was always the strong Son of God. He put all the emphasis upon His Christhood, and rightly so, for it has everything to do with His Saviourhood. God revealed *His Son* in Paul, and the result was a changed experience, a changed outlook, and a changed attitude. In all his after ministry he was constrained by the love of Christ—love enthroned despite its crown of thorns, or rather because of its crown—and life had for him a new meaning and shone with a new brightness because life itself was Christ : *To me to live is* CHRIST.[2]

> Christ ! I am Christ's ! and let the name suffice you,
> Aye, for me too He greatly hath sufficed ; . . .
> Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
> Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

[1] Gal. i. 15. [2] Phil. i. 21.

Consider, further, His Zeal as a Preacher and Pastor. The idea of presenting Paul as a preacher came naturally within the range of St. Luke's object in writing the Acts ; and with all a disciple's diligence and devotion he has preserved examples of his master's method of bringing home to men the fact of Christ. We have the sermons at Antioch in Pisidia,[1] Lystra,[2] and Athens[3] ; the farewell address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus[4] ; the speeches on the steps of the castle[5] and before the Council at Jerusalem[6] ; and the defences made before Felix[7] and Agrippa.[8] And there is a fragment from a sermon preached at Rome.[9] These reveal the matter and method of the apostle's preaching. They were chosen carefully, and were intended by the historian to be typical. Let these discourses be brought together, and we are impressed at once by their breadth and their singularity. They represent a man whose faith is firmly based upon a central truth, but whose sympathies reach out to all men, notwithstanding the diversity of their mode of thought and manner of life ; a man who is sure that he has found the main stream of grace and not a mere runnel in the sands ; a man who strives to present the faith he holds in such a way as to gain the allegiance of those to whom he speaks. But there was something more than all this in the preaching of Paul. There was, for example, his tireless energy, his dauntless courage, his burning zeal, his flashing indignation, his compelling passion, and

[1] Acts xiii. 13–52. [2] Acts xiv. 8–18. [3] Acts xvii. 15–34.
[4] Acts xx. 18–35. [5] Acts xxi. 1–21. [6] Acts xxiii. 1–10.
[7] Acts xxiv. 10–21. [8] Acts xxvi. 2–23.
[9] Acts xxviii. 25–28. For Paul's speeches see Maurice Jones, *St. Paul the Orator*.

his unyielding hope. His words moved men to acquiescence or opposition, to tears or terror. The Jews resisted ; the Ephesian elders wept ; Felix trembled ; Festus interrupted. And Paul has borne witness to his own devotion, and has unveiled the secret of it all : *I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*[1]

Thus Paul the preacher. But successful preaching needs for the conservation of its results the services of the pastor. And Paul as a pastor was equally as intense. The growth of the Churches added a new obligation. In any emergency they appealed to him, and in cases where no appeal was made the fact of their need filtered through to him. And he felt the burden of it. *Beside*, he writes, *those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches.*[2] Every one of his converts was dear to him : *I have you in my heart.*[3] *I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.*[4] Sometimes the news he received filled him with glorying on their behalf,[5] sometimes with wistfulness and fear.[6] With what hot words does he condemn those who, themselves wandering, sought to lead others astray ![7] How eagerly did he seek to restore the wayward ![8] And all this pastoral zeal finds expression in one glowing phrase, *Who is made to stumble*, AND I BURN NOT ?[9] And the motive of it all is this, *that we may present every man perfect in Christ.*[10]

[1] Acts xx. 24. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 28. [3] Phil. i. 7. [4] 2 Cor. xi. 2. [5] Phil. i. 3–8. [6] 1 Cor. i. 11, v. 1 ; Gal. i. 6, iii. 1, iv. 11. [7] Gal v. 12. [8] Gal. iv. 19. [9] 2 Cor. xi. 29. [10] Col. i. 28.

Think, too, of His Zeal for the Perfecting of His Own Spiritual Life. He knew that prominence did not exempt from peril. *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.*[1] That is an amazing word from such a man as Paul. But it is in keeping with his doctrine of indwelling sin. His fear of falling below standard worth and of becoming reprobate leads to his self-discipline. For himself, apart from grace he finds no hope of deliverance, but he exults in the triumph which is the gift of Christ.[2] Conscience to him is ever the voice of God, and to its demands he yields absolute obedience.[3] And the 'one thing' of his aspiration is the full apprehension of all that Christ can be to the soul of man.[4]

And, finally, there is His Devotion to His Friends. He had, as the following pages attempt to show, a genius and a hunger for friendship. His memory was tenacious of any kindness ever shown to him. He seems never to have forgotten, and the many tributes and appreciations which add such a singular charm to his letters are like the choice blue and gold with which leisured scribes were wont to enrich ancient manuscripts. Again and again in these letters he opens his store of felicitous memories and allows his heart to speak as friend speaks of friend. Again and again he turns from controversy and rebuke and exhortation to pen some tender, graceful word concerning those who

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. [2] Rom. vii. 24.
[3] Acts xxiii. 1, xxiv. 16; Rom. ix. 1; 2 Tim. i. 3. [4] Phil. iii. 12–14.

shared the toils and triumphs of his ministry. Paul's was a friendship which gave, and his friends were his 'joy and crown,' his 'beloved.'[1] And a friendship which gives has its own rights. It claims love for love. And that is the reason why, when the love of any grew cold, and when one after another left him, and the pain of solitude smote into his soul, he wrote those words of tense appeal[2] which show how ardent was his desire for fellowship, and how keen was his disappointment when it was withheld. In the words of Newman: 'He had a thousand friends, and loved each as his own soul, and seemed to live a thousand lives in them, and died a thousand deaths when he must quit them.'

[1] Phil. iv. 1. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 9–15.

LUKE: THE COMPANIONABLE

The rector of Heigham, who had a particular acquaintance with Sir Thomas Browne for two-thirds of his life, drew up 'some minutes' of the career of his greatly esteemed friend; from this quaintly interesting source of information we learn that . . . 'his memory was capacious and tenacious, he was excellent company when he was at leisure, and expressed more light than heat in the temper of his brain. He had power over his affections and passions, . . . he was never dejected with sadness, always cheerful. . . . Free from loquacity, something difficult to be engaged in any discourse, though when he was so it was always singular and never trite or vulgar. Parsimonious in nothing but his time . . . he was scarce patient of any diversion from his study; so impatient of sloth and idleness that he would say he could not do nothing. He understood most of the European languages. . . . Latin and Greek he understood critically.'

In 1656 Joseph Hall, then Bishop of Norwich, died. Dr. Browne, his faithful physician and loving friend for many years, attended the bishop in his last illness.

Dr. D. Lloyd Roberts, Introduction to *Religio Medici*.

Had Sir Thomas Browne lived in Paul's day, the praying apostle would have ranked him with Luke, and would have called them his two beloved physicians.

Dr. Alexander Whyte.

II

Luke: the Companionable

We demand a heavy price from our great men, when, because of their unquestioned distinctions, we close our eyes to their homelier qualities and refuse to see them as other than distinguished. We do them an injustice when we forget that it is good neither for them nor for others that they should be made to dwell permanently upon the heights. And we do ourselves an injustice also, for we miss thereby the human touch so often communicated through the common virtues. St. Luke furnishes a case in point. Among the great men of the New Testament he is one of the greatest, and the most accidental mention of his name provokes thoughts of his peerless contribution to our sacred literature. Let his share be taken from the New Testament, and it would be a greatly impoverished book. He will always live in the esteem of the Church because he has given her the Third Gospel and the Acts. But there are some who, admitting all that, choose to think of him as he trod the humbler walks of life, and delight to see him in the more subdued light of a personal friendship. For of all the men who consorted with Paul none, with the possible exception of Timothy, was dearer to his heart than Luke.

Of the many rare qualities which transfigure human nature, few have added more lavishly to the zest of living than those that lie at the heart of a clear, devoted, and unselfish friendship. Who is

there but would confess himself poor, seeing that the heart hungers for such communion, who could not count among the circle of his acquaintances one at least who has passed the recognized bounds of conventional courtesy and has demonstrated his right to be received as friend? And be it said in passing that he who knows the true inwardness of this glowing word, who has been able to look into its very soul, has his face toward the sure knowledge of God; for it is when we realize the worth of a friend that we come to understand something of the Higher Friendship.

Two causes have been advanced in explanation of our friendships: that of natural affinity, as expressed in Montaigne's eulogy of his friend: 'If any man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I can but answer, because it was he, because it was I'; and that deeper conviction that there is something of divine providence in the circumstances which effect the coming together of kindred souls, as Emerson would have it: 'My friends have come to me unsought; the great God gave them me.' It is in this latter view that the secret of Luke's attachment to and admiration for Paul is to be found. That such a friendship existed, and that it was sustained until the martyrdom of Paul severed the golden bond, is beyond controversy. For this we have not only the references in the Pauline Epistles, but also the testimony of Irenaeus, supported substantially by other Patristic writers, that he was 'inseparable from Paul, and his fellow worker in the gospel.' Tertullian presents the other side of this same fellowship when he says that Paul was the

'illuminator of Luke.' On the strength of these statements the comradeship would appear to be well substantiated.

There are few outstanding New Testament characters of whom we know so little, and of whom we would fain know so much, as St. Luke. Professor Ramsay has advanced a theory to account for his introduction to St. Paul which adds a touch almost of romance to the incident recorded in Acts. xvi. 9, 10. The position this close student of all matters Pauline adopts is that Luke and the man of Macedonia are identical. 'When one reads the passage with that idea,' he writes, 'it acquires new meaning and increased beauty. . . . We can imagine how Paul came to Troas in doubt as to what should be done. As a harbour, it formed the link between Asia and Macedonia. Here he met the Macedonian Luke, and with his view turned onwards he slept and beheld in a vision his Macedonian acquaintance, beckoning him onward to his own country. . . . Luke was attracted to Paul; and the vision was taken by Luke, as well as by Paul, for a sign. He left all, and followed his master.'[1] It is a striking theory, and it challenges consideration; but it scarcely meets all the facts of the case.[2] When all things are taken into account, it is better to assume an earlier association. It is clear, however, that at this point there is the beginning of a more definite fellowship. The use of the pronoun 'we'[3] involves comradeship and participation. From the time that he came in this definite way into the life of Paul he exerted a definite influence upon him,

[1] *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 203. [2] See Rackham, *Acts*, pp. xxix.–xxxii.
[3] Acts xvi. 10–17, xx. 5–38, xxi. 1–18, xxvii. 1–44, xxviii. 1–16.

and shared whole-heartedly his missionary endeavour and hope. And until the eve of the martyrdom, with but few absences, he was inseparable from Paul. And so at the end of his ministry, when the desertion of Demas and the scattering of others of the famous circle cast a shadow over him, the grand old leader could still count upon the sympathy of one heroic soul: *Luke is with me.*[1]

It remains for us to trace those qualities which equipped St. Luke for the work of comradeship to which the providence of God had called him. Foremost among these His Consecrated Culture should be mentioned. Both Luke and Paul had a genuine love of learning, but the scholarship of the one differed in details from that of the other. Paul's mind was of a deeper, more philosophic mould than that of Luke. And Luke's was more artistic. The resultant interplay of mind upon mind must have been to the mutual advantage of each. We owe to the pen of Luke an almost perfect portrait of his friend. And we have but to read the Third Gospel carefully, noting the while the studied use of such characteristically Pauline words as 'faith,' 'mercy,' 'grace,' and 'remission,' to see the debt Luke owed to Paul. The accurate scholarship and literary genius of Luke; his rare gift of observation; his careful mode of expression; his capacity for taking pains which even his easy and polished sentences fail to hide; his refined and sensitive nature, together with his oneness with the high ideals of Paul's ministry, made him peculiarly the man the apostle needed. And when we add to this the fact that he was *the beloved physician*,[2]

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 11. [2] Col. iv. 14.

and remember that Paul laboured under the limitations of ill health, we see that he possessed an added faculty of being serviceable. Not that serviceableness is a *sine qua non* of friendship—although it would be a poor kind of comradeship which communicated nothing of mutual good—but the consecration of high gifts for another's good is always the proof of love. And all Luke's gifts of learning and of skill were at Paul's disposal.

Then, too, His Careful Self-effacement was another notable feature of his companionableness. At first sight it creates some little surprise that Paul says practically nothing of St. Luke and his protracted friendship. Of some of his more obscure companions he writes tender and graceful tributes, but not so of Luke. But the reason of this silence is not far to seek. Luke was too great a man, too much one of his peers, to need any commendatory word even from Paul. And the apostle knew the reticence of his friend. Luke has a habit of deliberate self-effacement, and we search in vain for any reference to himself in his writings. He is content to be historian and biographer, but he is careful to make succeeding generations discover for themselves the authorship of this finest biographical fragment in the world. The Acts is more than the record of a friendship, yet there is a qualified sense in which it may be understood as such, for St Luke's unbounded admiration for Paul is undisguised. From the time that he appears on it pages the other apostles gradually disappear. Luke is manifestly under the spell of Paul, and he loses himself in the thought of his master. But what a temptation there was to a smaller soul in the

compiling of such a book for self-assertion! How easily a less dignified writer might have fallen into the snare! But Luke is splendidly reserved, and the portrait he has given us of Paul is *unsigned*. There is excellent taste and rare refinement in his friendship; he does not seek to glorify self by the appropriation of the merit of another. It is by the insinuation of itself by the side of the great that we see the distressful littleness of a small nature. Hence to play the proper part of genuine friendship demands more conscientious restraint in matters relating to oneself than is required in any other relationship of life. Modesty is an imperative necessity!

Further, Luke's fitness for companionship was augmented by His Exhilarating Cheerfulness. Luke delights in scenes of gladness. His Gospel[1] and the Acts[2] abound with examples of this. And Luke's optimism communicated healing to Paul's stricken soul quite as much as his skilled hand gave health to his body. Paul needed such a friend. During those years of hard toil and wearing strain when he was brought into closest contact with the crude facts of life, when his own health was giving way, when he was feeling the pressing anxiety of all the Churches, and when the disloyalty of some of his converts was wounding his sensitive soul, the presence of such a colleague as Luke would be of inestimable worth. We must judge of Luke by other facts than those we can crowd upon a schedule. And one of them is his genius for happiness. It nerved men to courage and hope and joy, and thus made melancholy and fear impossible. Paul groups

[1] See Plummer's *St. Luke*, p. xlvi., and [2] Rackham's *Acts*, p. xxxv. f.

him in the Epistle to Philemon with other of his 'fellow workers,' but it was not so much the actual work he did—although that was of no small account—as the influence he exerted that made his comradeship so indispensable. He was a joy-bringer!

And, finally, Luke exhibited THE STERLING GIFT OF LOYALTY. From the time that he adventured himself with Paul through weal and woe he remained faithful. He had watched the breaking up of the little band; he had seen his leader grow prematurely old through his exacting labours; and he had guessed the issue of the impending trial before Nero. Yet until the end came he would never be absent for long from the side of the man whom he loved as his own soul. *Only Luke is with me,*[1] throbs the human cry of the heart that hungered for the presence of those who felt and understood; but Luke was *with* him in the intenser meaning of that word—*with* him in everything that appertained to the spread of the Redeemer's Kingdom—and for him to desert in the hour of danger would not only have been a violation of trust and honour, a transgression of the most sacred sanctions of life, but it would have assumed the proportions of a disloyalty to Christ. His was the rare distinction of the companionable.

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 11.

BARNABAS: THE DISCERNING

Leaving France, I retired into Germany expressly for the purpose of being able to enjoy in some obscure corner the repose I had always desired, and which had so long been denied me. And I had resolved to continue in the same obscurity, till at length William Farel detained me at Geneva, and that not so much by counsel and exhortation as by a dread imprecation, which I felt to be as if God from heaven laid His mighty hand upon me to arrest me. For after having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to my private studies, for which I wished to keep myself free from all other engagements, and finding that he could gain nothing by entreating me, he proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement, and would blast my selfish studies, if I should refuse to come to Geneva when the need was so great.

CALVIN.

They parted . . .
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which have been rent asunder,
A dreary sea now rolls between;
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

COLERIDGE.

III

Barnabas: the Discerning

To Joseph of Cyprus a new name was given by the members of the church at Jerusalem. The renaming came about in this wise. One day the term '*barnabas*'[1] fell from the lips of one of his friends who wished to crowd his noble service into a single word; and the designation was so felicitous that it gradually superseded the name he had previously borne, and the Levite destined to play such an important part in the development of Christianity and the fortunes of St. Paul became known by it. And a son of exhortation he truly was in his handling of the prophetic Word, in his unselfish bestowal of his wealth to meet the necessities of the needy saints, and in his tender befriending of wayward and repentant hearts. So much so that the Scriptures, which do not bestow indiscriminate praises upon any, and are sparing of eulogies even of their greatest men, say of him, *He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.*[2] And for exposition of this superb tribute, Bengel, whose cogent sentences go so directly to the heart of a text, contents himself by simply pointing to Gal. v. 22. It is the finest comment that could be made. It would be entering upon an impossible task to attempt to estimate the extent of the service he rendered to the Apostolic Church. There are abundant references in the Acts to his manifold labours, but they refer mainly to the

[1] i.e. son of exhortation. [2] Acts xi. 24.

time when he was 'Saul's sponsor at Jerusalem,' and afterwards his companion in missionary endeavour. They represent only a phase of his activity, and we are not to suppose that when he severs his association with the apostle, and consequently falls out of the range of Luke's narrative, his interest and labour in the cause of the Evangel terminated. Years after, when the fires of the regrettable controversy concerning his cousin Mark had died out, Paul speaks of him with chivalrous affection. Quantitatively his work was vast, but that was not its only measurement. It endured the qualitative test also. There are some things whose full worth we can never appraise in the terms of the commercial life; they defy the measuring-rod and mock the plummet; and among them are the aspirations and achievements of men of the type of Barnabas. As soon can we value a sunbeam or a rose by the mere standards of weight and bulk. Barnabas toiled much, and he toiled well.

The first glimpse we get of him reveals the Generosity of His Unselfish Nature. It was in the early days of the Church, when her members, in the flush of their new experience, volunteered their goods for the benefit of their poorer brethren. Into this dawning principle of Christian communism Barnabas entered with all the warmth of his sympathetic nature. *And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*[1] A sentence in 1 Cor. ix. 6 implies that the surrender of his

[1] Acts iv. 36, 37.

wealth was absolute, and that in the after years he was obliged to toil with his hands to sustain his life. The sacrifice was such as many others had made, but it stands in vivid contrast to the instance of Ananias which follows immediately after. These two examples interact, the case of Barnabas silently condemning that of Ananias, yet having its true nobleness emphasized by the comparison. The service for the brethren was service to the Christ.

> Who counts his brother's welfare
> As sacred as his own, . . .
> He serveth Me alone.

In the letter which the apostles and elders at Jerusalem sent to the Greek converts at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia there is a sentence which enunciates another feature of his ministry. *Our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[1] The word '*hazarded*' is not so expressive and picturesque as that employed by Paul in Phil. ii. 30, but it nevertheless conveys the idea of SACRIFICIAL DEVOTION. That was the natural crown of their ministry; step by step they placed themselves beyond the realm of self-interest, and became absorbed to the degree of completeness in the success of the gospel. Foremost in the van of the great battle these heroic souls took their place, recking little of their own comfort and happiness so that Christ be preached and glorified. If the quality of a service is to be judged by its dominating motive, that of Barnabas and Paul was of transcendent

[1] Acts xv. 25, 26.

worth. There was a strain of valour in it. Potentially they were martyrs—'martyrs,' as Alford says, '*in will*, though their lives had not as yet been laid down in point of fact.' We have come to look for that in Paul, for his feet ever trod the path of peril; but it is an unexpected attribute in Barnabas. What a revealing light it throws upon the courage of the overlooked! And how true it is that in the day when the 'village-Hampdens' have the dust swept from their faces many will step from the lowest ranks to receive the reward of the brave!

Perhaps the most outstanding trait in the character of Barnabas is his DISCERNMENT. He possessed that rare gift of insight which enables men to get beneath the surface and discover the deeps of another's soul; and often in the face of popular prejudice he was courageous enough to act as he saw. On two occasions he dared to risk his reputation in the Early Church on the judgement he had formed of Paul. Shortly after the remarkable conversion, when the leaders of the Church hesitated in their reception of the devastator of the Faith, he espoused his cause, and gained for him a place of security and even of honour among the men whose lives, in his misguided zeal, he had held in jeopardy. *When he was come to Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.*[1] That was the venturesomeness of a discerning mind. Some have endeavoured

[1] Acts ix. 26, 27.

to explain it away on the supposition that Barnabas had had some previous knowledge of Saul, and was possibly a fellow student with him in the school of Gamaliel. There is no shred of evidence in the narrative to substantiate this : it is an eager attempt to account for the action of Barnabas apart altogether from his quick discernment. It asserts that he welcomed Saul on the ground of former acquaintance rather than on that of intuition. It is far better to take the simple fact as Luke has stated it, and, without wandering into debatable ground, seek its intepretation in that which does not make such heavy demands upon the imagination. Barnabas knew the reputation of Saul, and he also knew, partly through the testimony of Saul himself, and partly through that of the saints at Damascus, his change of attitude toward the Faith. The rest is easy. He argued that a zealot in a wrong cause does not sink into a nobody when he takes the step from the false to the true. Hence his bold action was but the logical outcome of his clear discernment. It would be an exaggeration to say that he foresaw in Saul all that Paul became ; but it is quite within the mark to say that he recognized strength when he saw it. And Paul even in his Pharisaic days was nothing if not strong. There is something praiseworthy in a soul which, beholding in another the dim promise of some better, finer thing than he has yet achieved, does not hesitate to defend his cause against the suspicions of others whose goodwill he may alienate and whose judgement he may cross by his daring advocacy. This Barnabas did for Saul.

Again, after Barnabas had been sent as a delegate

by the church at Jerusalem to witness the work of grace among the Greeks at Antioch, and after his own fruitful ministry there, he remembered Saul; and being assured that he was the man to consolidate that work, *He went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.*[1] He knew the far-reaching importance of the step he was taking; he knew that he was acting without the sanction of the church whose representative he was; yet because he believed Saul was the man to cope with the peculiar nature of the work there he did not hesitate to bring him from Tarsus, and then he unselfishly stepped aside to allow him the unfettered exercise of his great gifts. There was discernment in that. And there was something greater than discernment; there was magnanimity. And concerning this Dr. Whyte has stated the case in a sentence which, while reading like hyperbole, is really calmest truth: 'I would far rather have a little of Barnabas's grace than all Saul's genius.'

His attitude toward his cousin Mark is another example of his discernment. It will be noticed that Barnabas disappears from Luke's record suddenly and with something akin to a shadow resting upon him. The story is told in Acts xv. 36–40, and it is full of sadness, reflecting all too plainly the weakness of human nature, even the weakness of the strong. To Paul Mark's return to Jerusalem[2] was nothing less than cowardice and desertion, a withdrawal of the hand after it had been put to the plough. He could never confide in Mark again. Barnabas took the more lenient view, surely for some stronger reason than that of a family relationship; and the

[1] Acts xi. 25. [2] Acts xiii. 13.

sharp contention which followed severed the comradeship of the two. Into the wrongfulness of this strife we need not enter, save to say that neither Barnabas nor Paul could possibly shine in it. Both were strong men; both were controversialists[1]; and each had a phase of truth on his side. And because of that bit of truth, and because they were both so partly in the right that neither would yield or see the other side of the question, both became grievously in the wrong, and a splendid friendship all but collapsed. But when everything else in the unhappy quarrel is forgotten the incident still stands as a witness of Barnabas's power of discernment. He saw beyond Mark's failure a promise of retrieval, and once again he was right in his forecast. In his latest days Paul wrote to Timothy concerning the man whom previously he had rejected, *Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering.*[2] And is not that—the contention forgotten—the vindication of Barnabas? And concerning him and all like-minded men, in all the nobler qualities of their nature—believing all things, hoping all things, and risking all things—Keble has written the appropriate word:

New hearts before their Saviour's feet to lay,
  This is their first, their dearest joy;
Their next, from heart to heart to clear the way
  For mutual love without alloy:
Never so blest as when in Jesus' roll
  They write some hero-soul,
More pleased upon his brightening road
To wait, than if their own with all his radiance glowed.

[1] Gal. ii. 11–14. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 11.

MARK: THE UNSTABLE

They who give the portraits of legendary saints generally paint them without a single failing. But they who wish faithfully to imitate the sacred authors are obliged to employ shades as well as lights, even in their most celebrated pieces. If this part of the portrait of St. Paul should not appear brilliant, it will serve, at least, to manifest the reality of the original, the liberality of the apostle, and the fidelity of the painter.

FLETCHER OF MADELEY.

Have ye looked
At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly changed?
This work of his is great and wonderful.
His very face with change of heart is changed.
The world will not believe a man repents:
And this wise world of ours is mainly right.
Full seldom doth a man repent, or use
Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart
As I will weed this land before I go.
I, therefore, make him of our Table Round,
Not rashly, but have proved him everyway
One of the noblest, our most valorous,
Sanest and most obedient.

TENNYSON.

IV

Mark: the Unstable

In relating the events of the First Missionary Journey it was necessary for Luke, to explain the cleavage between Barnabas and Paul, to introduce the association of John Mark with the apostles. It is one of the greatest shadows in this so fascinating and yet so human record. When Barnabas and Saul had brought the contribution of the church at Antioch in Syria for the relief of the brethren in Judaea, Mark was captured by the story to which he listened of the work at Antioch; and, without counting the cost, he signified his willingness to go with them as a subordinate upon their return thither. When the apostles decided upon the extension of the range of their missionary endeavour, Mark consented to accompany them; but when, after a short preaching-tour in Cyprus, they reached Perga in Pamphylia his enthusiasm had spent itself, and he returned to Jerusalem. The apostles, however, pushed on into Asia Minor, visiting in turn Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Soon they retraced their steps, and, sailing from Attalia, returned to Syrian Antioch. Hearing that they were once more in Antioch, Mark rejoined them, and here they remained some months. Then, upon the suggestion of Paul, the wisdom of a return visit to the cities wherein they had preached was discussed; but because of a controversy concerning Mark this visit was abandoned, and Paul and

Barnabas parted, never to work side by side again. *Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them at Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder.*[1] It was to explain the rupture between Barnabas and Paul that Luke included the unhappy story in his pages, and from that point he had nothing more to say concerning Barnabas and Mark. But fortunately for the reputation of Mark —and for that of Paul also—the apostle himself has given us in a gracious sentence or two the sequel of the whole matter: *Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, . . . if he come unto you, receive him.*[2] *Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is useful to me for ministering.*[3]

This Mark became the writer of the earliest Gospel, and that fact and the references from the pen of Paul are proof of the invaluable service he ultimately rendered to the Church. Yet in early life he made such a withdrawal from the work to which he had tacitly committed himself as to create a suspicion of his own courage and to sever the comradeship of the two men whom he had set out to help. Paul, with his fine sense of honour, refused the co-operation in Asia Minor of one whose previous defection he could regard only as reprehensible; while Barnabas, believing that there was something better in him than he had ever shown, stood out for a second chance to be given. Read in the light of after events, we see that Barnabas was right concerning him, and that Paul, despite his zeal for the fair fame

[1] Acts xv. 37–39. [2] Col. iv. 10. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 11.

of the gospel, made an error of judgement, seeing only an unjustifiable action with no promise of a time when the former wrong would be purged away and the old confidence revived and restored. To express such an opinion involves a departure from the conventional exegesis which refuses to see the apostle void of the halo. But surely it does not impair our devotion to him as our spiritual master to know him for the moment as a man with the frailties of human judgement and passion upon him, making a mistake consequent upon the limitations under which all men have to act. He has too great a power over our mind and too deep a place in our heart for that. And he speaks to men with no diminished authority because he was no statuesque saint, but a man of like passions with themselves. Doubtless he had reason to hesitate before entering upon an extended field of missionary activity with one who formerly, when the same field was before them, had abandoned the cause. Paul felt a distrust of Mark ; between them

> There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
> . . . the glimmer of twilight,
> Never glad, confident morning again.

But he carried prudence a step too far, and exaggerated the virtue into a defect. Tennyson puts upon the lips of the dying king this message of hope for Sir Bedivere after the knight had failed him twice :

> a man may fail in duty twice,
> And the third time may prosper ;

but Paul was suspicious even of the second chance, and acted upon the principle involved in the advice

a Quaker is said to have given his son: 'If a man deceive thee once, rebuke him; if he deceive thee a second time, rebuke thyself.' In his later years he exhorted the Galatians to restore the brother overtaken in a trespass[1]; and though the two cases are by no means parallel, the spirit of the exhortation might well have been applied in the case of Mark, and a greater clemency might have obviated a distasteful situation and gained a brother more surely for the service of the Church.

But what of Mark himself? When we trace his withdrawal back to its probable causes, we see that it has a practical bearing upon the limitations put upon Christian service until its perfection is marred and its glory tarnished. Foremost among these was his FAILURE TO REALIZE THE WORLD-RANGE OF THE CHRISTIAN EVANGEL. It must be remembered that he was a Christian Jew, possessing at once the excellences and prejudices of his race; a Jew whose religious conceptions had been moulded by the teaching of St. Peter, whose custom it was to make the home of Mary, the mother of Mark, his rendezvous in the strenuous days of his apostolic labours; a Jew without the supernatural vision granted to St. Paul and the accompanying commission to evangelize the Gentile world. At the time of his withdrawal, despite his association with the Antiochian leaders, Mark was of a Petrine rather than Pauline turn of mind; and this may be an important factor in determining his action. Peter had not yet come into the fullness of his slowly-widening sympathies, and Mark had not outgrown the influence of Peter.[2] Although he could not be the companion of Paul

[1] Gal. vi. 1. [2] See Bigg, *Int. Crit. Com., Peter and Jude*, pp. 81, 82.

without an expansion of his views, yet the old and cherished hope of the Twelve lingered in his heart. He was more nationalist in spirit than cosmopolitan, more exclusive than liberal in his views, and the least widening of the plan of campaign was sufficient to estrange him from it.

Literalism in the Discharge of an Obligation was another cause of his turning back. Barnabas and Paul had set out from Antioch with a clearly defined purpose, and solely on their own responsibility they had taken him as an assistant. He had no commission from the Church, yet when something occurred in Pamphylia that caused them to vary their original intention Mark 'conceived the idea that the new proposal was a departure from the scheme with which they had been charged, carrying the work into a region different in character and not contemplated by the Church.'[1] Hence aloofness appeared to him to be a duty. As far as he understood it he was prepared to obey the will of the Church, and that literally. But he had to learn that literalism is not always truest loyalty; that God sometimes overrules the human rule, and thus makes the accidental providential. That was to follow. His soul was to outgrow the trammels of precise obligation, and he was yet to see in new experiences fresh and fuller opportunities; but for the time being he was bondsman to the letter of a demand the heart of which he so blindly missed. How modern it all is! How frequently do men magnify a regulation wisely formed for their guidance and for the oncewhile good of the Church into an obstacle which bars the progress of the very gospel it was

[1] See Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 90.

intended to help! Obedience is a law of life which literalists strangle by their punctiliousness.

Then there was his DREAD OF THE HARDSHIP INCIDENT TO THE HERALDING OF THE CROSS. He was not prepared to face such tests as Paul afterwards classified in 2 Cor. xi. 23–27. He had been nurtured in a home of comfort, and when his early enthusiasm had spent itself the rough work of the pioneer put a strain upon his courage it could not endure. If there is a position between timidity and cowardice, a shrinking which is not exactly censurable, Mark held it at the time. He did not see the rightness nor the necessity of the journey across the Taurus; and when the decision of the others clashed with his wishes, his will refused to bend and his defection was inevitable. Thus step by step the narrow vision, the handicap of the literal, the fear of discomfort, and the distrust of others led him to an unworthy retreat.

And this is the man who was to become the writer of the earliest Gospel, 'the interpreter of Peter,' the confidant of Paul's later years, and whose symbol among Patristic writers was that of a lion! Nearly twelve years intervene between the incident at Perga and the writing of the Epistle to the Colossians, and by that time Paul could commend Mark to the welcome of the Church. And a few years later still the dreary days of his final imprisonment were cheered by the prospect of the coming of Mark. The latent good in Mark had so far developed, and the spirit of Paul had so far mellowed, that now the apostle could be as sincere in his appreciation as he had been severe in his earlier criticism. *He is profitable to me*, he writes, and it is worthy of notice

GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

that he employs of him the very term he had previously used of Onesimus the restored. 'When death, the great Reconciler, has come,' writes George Eliot, 'it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity.'

By what process Mark gained his way back to the heart of Paul we have no definite information ; but we are safe in assuming that the growth of his soul in the grace of Christ led to another abandonment—that of his earlier prejudices and his stubborn self-will. And it may have been good for Mark that Paul refused him ; he was brought to realize himself through the discipline of a refusal.

> I once . . .
> . . . found a fair young squire who sat alone,
> Had carved himself a knightly shield of wood,
> And then was painting on it fancied arms,
> Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun
> In dexter chief ; the scroll 'I follow fame.'
> And speaking not, but leaning over him,
> I took his brush and blotted out the bird,
> And made a Gardener putting in a graff,
> With this for motto, 'Rather use than fame.'
> You should have seen him blush ; but afterwards
> He made a stalwart knight.[1]

And of Paul, Lightfoot's illuminating note is all that need be advanced : 'The studious recommendation of St. Mark indicates a desire to efface the unfavourable impression of the past.' The sorrow-laden controversy is worth revealing if for no other reason than to point the possibility of all similar reconciliations.

[1] Tennyson, *Idylls of the King, Merlin and Vivien.*

TIMOTHY: THE UNSELFISH

I opened my oldest Bible just now. . . . My mother's list of chapters with which, learned every syllable accurately, she established my soul in life, has just fallen out of it. . . . And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after-life, and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one essential part of all my education.

RUSKIN.

The fact of the matter is that Mill had no chance. He was led astray from the very beginning. His horrible father, James Mill, the philosopher, historian, and economist, was largely indifferent to pleasure or pain, and inaccessible to the softer sides of human existence. . . . Mill himself said, 'My father demanded of me not only the utmost I could do, but much that I could by no possibility have done.'

SIR W. ROBERTSON NICOLL.

V

Timothy: the Unselfish[1]

An unfortunate theory is fairly prevalent that Timothy shines in the New Testament with a borrowed light, and not by virtue of his own individuality. Fastening upon certain phrases in the Pastoral Epistles, which if they stood alone might possibly bear that interpretation, it has been assumed that he was a weak-willed youth, full of indecision, easily led astray, prone to play the coward in the hour of stress, and capable of nothing either original or distinguished. Hence he is regarded as little more than a surface void of outstanding characteristics. 'Timothy,' it has been said, 'comes before us for fourteen or at most eighteen years, and vanishes, never to be forgotten, never to be known, loved not for his own sake, but because Paul loved him, an example of the power which lies in a great man to make others noble and even illustrious by his presence.'[2] Whatever tribute this may pay to Paul, it must be challenged so far as Timothy is concerned if it is intended to be a calm statement of the whole case. Few would care to claim for him a character of outstanding strength, but the words 'loved not for his own sake, but because Paul loved him,' do not allow for the fact that the planet nearest to the sun is ever liable to

[1] Several paragraphs in this chapter are reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of *The Christian World Pulpit.*

[2] Horton, *Pastoral Epistles* (*Cent. Bib.*), p. 51.

suffer because of the obvious contrast. When all the facts are taken into consideration it must be seen that Timothy has a claim upon our affection *for his own sake.*

It may be assumed that he was converted at Lystra during Paul's first missionary journey, and upon his return he found the young disciple *well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.*[1] So full of promise did he seem, and so great was the impression made upon Paul, that he desired to have him as a companion, probably to take with Silas the place of Mark, and from that time he never speaks of him save in terms of unqualified affection; and in the closing days of his ministry he desires to have him with him in the stead of those whom duty and adversity had scattered. The thought is hardly to be entertained that Paul would choose, or, if he had and his choice had been unwise, would *retain,* for so important a calling a weakling; or that Timothy, who knew from the apostle's experiences at Lystra what hardships the preaching of the Way involved, would have responded so willingly or have continued so loyally had be been of craven mould. There was a simplicity, a willingness, an enthusiasm, and a loyalty about him which won the heart of Paul; and the apostle was a fairly shrewd judge of character. And when he contemplated sending him as a messenger to the Philippian church he speaks of him thus: *I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel.*[2]

[1] Acts xvi. 2. [2] Phil. ii. 20–22.

That is one of the finest eulogies that ever came from the pen of Paul. But when they first came together Timothy bore traces of youthful weakness. He had to contend with the limitations of a frail physique. There was a timidity and reserve about him which took years to outgrow, and which sometimes led to a shrinking from the assertion of his proper authority. Paul saw the necessity to warn him against those fires which burn in human nature, and to encourage him to heroism in the cause of Christ. At that time he had slumbering in the depths of his nature the possibilities of sloth and sensuality and cowardice ; but over these he triumphed, and became a splendid type of noble and chivalrous manhood. And this contains and proclaims a gospel. If a man will, the tendencies in his nature which are divergent from Christ can be arrested and made convergent to Him. Timothy got from some source or other elements of strength and virtue which became, as it were, the fibre of his manliness. There dwelt an unfeigned faith in him ; at the heart of it there was a genuineness which could not be misunderstood, and it dwelt in him not as a transient guest, but as an abiding principle. And it is for us to consider the sources of his attained character.

First, there was THE INHERITANCE OF A RELIGIOUS TENDENCY. Paul reminded him of *the unfeigned faith that is in thee ; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice.*[1] There you have his secret, and it did not escape the keen eye of St. Paul. It is possible that he owed little to his father save his weakness. Born a pagan, and with all the instincts of paganism interwoven in the texture

[1] 2 Tim. i. 5.

of his being, Timothy's father never understood the spiritual yearnings of his Jewish wife. Disappointed —so far as religion was concerned—in her husband, Eunice centred all her hopes in her child. Like Hannah of old, she cherished the ambition that her boy should be consecrated to the Lord. Therefore whatever would foster the religious tendency was to be found in that home at Lystra. And the soul of the child responded to the influence of his mother's training, and the faith which dwelt in her heart visited his and abode there. It was the dawn of manhood.

And is it not clear that the inheritance of the religious tendency, and the sacred influences which nourish it, are the formative data of our character? Are they not often the determining factors in human experience? It has been said that Kingsley's mother used to wander amid the exquisite scenery of Holne and Dartmoor in the hope that the vastness and beauty and poetry of it all might be impressed upon the mind of her child; and we know how fully her hope was realized. The world has known few clearer-souled men than Charles Kingsley. When Dr. Kelman endeavoured to trace the origins of the faith of R. L. Stevenson, he was confronted with the same fact: 'Heredity plays as large a part in religion as it does in any department of human life, and in Scotland there are few men who cannot trace their religious dispositions to some ancestral source.' When James Anthony Froude went through Carlyle's letters, he found one endorsed with a trembling hand, 'My last letter to my mother.' And here is an extract that has become familiar to us: 'I am now grown old, and have had various

hings to do and suffer for so many years ; but there is nothing I ever had to be so thankful for as the mother I had. May God reward you, my dearest mother ; I never can.' Think, too, of the tribute Wesley paid to his remarkable mother. It is possible that he never wrote a tenderer passage than that which contains these words : ' Her understanding was as good as her heart ; it is from her that I have inherited that alertness of mind and quickness of apprehension without which it would have been impossible for me to have undertaken half of what I have performed.' While it is true that a man must be more than the product of the traits of his ancestors, it is nevertheless true that the fibre of his manhood is the bequest of a pure and Christian parentage ; and that man is supremely to be pitied who has never known such an inspiration. Though he may attain the highest in character, he will ever carry with him the remembrances of the moral conflict of the bygone days. On the contrary,

> Happy he
> With such a mother ! faith in womankind
> Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
> Comes easy to him ; and tho' he trip and fall,
> He shall not blind his soul with clay.[1]

It was so with Timothy. He had inherited the religious tendency from Eunice, and through her influence he remained true to it. It was the secret of his strength.

Then there was THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. Great as was the contribution Eunice made to the character of her son,

[1] Tennyson, *The Princess*.

there was another element which made him a man after God's own heart. He became 'wise unto salvation.' There came to him an unwavering conviction that Christ was his Saviour, and a corresponding trust in God his Father. And it happened on this wise. From a child he had known the Scriptures, and therein he found that to which his soul responded. Lois and Eunice had interpreted to him the sacred story of Israel's history. And these devoted women would not content themselves with the repetition of the stories of heroism and adventure found within its pages. They would venture into the realm of the prophecies, they would come to some grand chapter which predicted the power of the Messiah, and they would tell the story of our Lord's miracles as they had heard them from the lips of eye-witnesses. Then they would turn with wistful hopes to some sublime passage which foretold the passion of the Christ, and they would tell the story of Calvary until Timothy's soul drank in the grand message of redemption; and, as a child, before sin had had its full power over him, he responded to the divine claim and love, and acknowledged the Christ of Nazareth as his Lord and Master.

However elementary this may sound, is it not true to the facts of human experience? Are there not multitudes of men and women to-day who remember with profoundest gratitude those daily instructions in the Word of God in the homes which now exist only as fragrant memories? Are there not many modern settings of the story of Eunice and her son? Is it not true that the Scriptures can so contribute to the fibre of our character as to make us

men of God? And is not the reason why the moral nature of so many is so often atrophied mainly this, that they never allow the magnificence of the Word to lay hold of them as it ought? Its grand gospel of forgiveness has been regarded as an idle tale; its splendid moral code is held by many to be impracticable in the pressure of modern life; its noble poetry has not charmed them; and its grand enthusiasms have failed to make their hearts aglow. There is tremendous moral power in it, but so long as men remain indifferent to its claims it can never effect any transformation in their lives. But to all who love it, to all who regard it as the truth of God and believe that behind it there is the authority of God, it shows the way along which the soul searching for eternal life may find its satisfaction and its rest.

There was yet another thing that in no small way contributed to the character of Timothy—THE INSPIRATION OF A NOBLE COMRADESHIP. He was the friend and associate of Paul, and in the magnificence of the apostle's undaunted courage and constancy he saw the promise of what he too might become. It is so with men to-day. Christian influence must tell for good upon all who have not lost their regard for goodness and their love of moral beauty. Stanley confessed with gratitude that Livingstone's influence upon him changed the whole manner and outlook of his life. Lord Peterborough said to Fénelon, after spending a few days with him, 'If I spend another week here I shall become a Christian in spite of myself.' It was this bond of friendship which kept the soul of Timothy true to the highest.

And when we turn to the service he rendered to the cause of Christ, we see the testing of his character. He was 'instant in season, out of season,' as a herald of the Cross. Inasmuch as he is mentioned conjointly with St. Paul in the greetings to Philemon and to the churches at Colossae and Philippi, it follows that he must have been with Paul during the first imprisonment, and that is a guarantee of his courage. Moreover, he was entrusted both at Ephesus and Corinth with affairs that needed delicate handling, such as could never have been left to one who had proved himself a failure. Either he was trustworthy or Paul was unwise. But the most noteworthy feature of his ministry was ITS ABSOLUTE DISINTERESTEDNESS. He was free from the slightest suspicion of professionalism. He yielded to no opportunity for self-advantage. With him thoughts of self were under perfect control. Writing to the Corinthians, the apostle pleads that he be esteemed on the ground that *he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do*.[1] But it is to the words already quoted from the Philippian letter that we turn for a true appreciation of his worth. Never did Paul allow himself such freedom in the praise of any of his co-workers as in this tender and generous outburst of feeling concerning one who had toiled with him in holy work and whom he had come to esteem as a genuine son. He had discovered one who had learned the secret of Jesus, even the secret of an instinctive, self-obliterating ministry; and whatever others may do, Paul loved him for his own sake. 'He who occupies himself with the things of Christ,'

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

so runs the happy phrase of the pure-souled Fra Angelico, 'must ever dwell with Christ.' This Timothy did; and his charming and devoted ministry is the inspiration of all such as undertake their sacred calling in a kindred spirit, and whose motive finds expression in the self-excluding words,

I will ask for no reward,
Except to serve Thee still.

TITUS: THE CONCILIATOR

There are some, it must be confessed, who seem to have a genius for peace—past masters in the gracious art of pacification. There is an instinctive fitness in their speech and in their silence. They disarm retaliation, and give men to feel in many ways that bitter quarrels and treasured spite and all the grievance-making ways of selfishness are unworthy the dignity of life. About these peacemakers there is an atmosphere in which petty differences dare not ask to be discussed, and in which exaggerated disagreements assume their normal proportions. They carry the art of peacemaking to its highest levels of continuity and effectiveness. Most of us know at least one such tranquillizing presence. The world has never been without them. But we must not misread the meaning of the peacemakers in our midst. They are not in the world to counteract the evil wrought by the wrathful, and by the men who would settle everything by means of the 'ordeal by battle.' The Father who would have all men dwell together in unity has set the children of peace among us that we may for ourselves behold the beauty of peace, and have a great desire for it, and that we may learn to fashion our unruly and ill-mannered lives after a more law-abiding and gracious pattern.

PERCY C. AINSWORTH.

VI

Titus: the Conciliator

It is related by Cornelius à Lapide that the conciliatory spirit was so deeply engrained in Gaspar Barzaus of Goa that the lawyers of that city complained that they would be reduced to poverty because his interventions made an end of all litigation. Notwithstanding the irony in that lament of the lawyers, the city gained in proportion to their loss. Intervention in the affairs of others—ever a matter that calls for the finest qualities of skill and patience—whenever it is successful, bestows a benefit upon those who would otherwise be foolishly sundered. Such intervention belongs primarily and properly to the social order, creating good feeling and better understanding between the members of any purely human institution. But, inasmuch as her members have to do battle with the prejudices and weaknesses and limitations of their human nature, its functions reach over to the Church, and she too stands in need of the peacemaker. In a multitude of ways, deplorable and shame-creating, the 'wrong within' asserts itself, and causes those tragic cleavages which not only give occasion for the shallow cynicisms of the outer world, but also hinder the work of grace in the soul. Nothing can be said in excuse of this. It is the triumph of the worst over the best.

The plea of the peacemaker is not necessarily

for the cessation of controversy. Seeing that men are so manifestly diverse in temperament and in intellect, and that influences have been at work upon the beliefs of some which others have never felt; seeing also that truth is so multiform, it follows that the men in opposite camps are liable to regard their own experience as the true norm, and to harden their own conception of a truth into a dogma they desire to be equally binding upon all. This inevitably provokes controversy. And controversy, so long as it can be kept free from unworthy heat, by correcting false emphases and opening the way for necessary readjustments, is not without distinct value to the cause of truth. But the danger is that men should sacrifice the qualities of their heart in the contentions that arise from the difference of their intellectual apprehensions. The bitterness with which discussion is so often permeated is a flagrant lapse from that chivalry and graciousness for which religion stands. The health is gone from controversy when the irenical spirit is lacking. It is no longer a quest for truth; it is nothing less than an unholy craving to see an adversary overthrown and in the dust. 'Certainly,' writes John Owen, whom circumstances had made a controversialist, but from whom the Christian spirit was never crushed, 'those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and have a due honour for the gospel, will, at one time or another, begin to think meet that this stain of our religion should be washed away.' That stain is a witness against and a rebuke of the folly which homes itself in the heart.

It is a precious sight to see the conciliator at work.

The service he renders not only confers benefits upon the reconciled, but it reacts upon himself. Many may rank higher in public esteem, but there are few joys greater than that of having effected a better understanding among men and bringing about a more tolerant and Christian relationship. And this was the distinction of Titus—he was a PEACEMAKER. All his other gifts lent their strength to this, and by it whatever claim to permanence he possessed must be demonstrated. The scanty reference to him in the New Testament has led some to the unwarrantable inference that he was a man of insignificance. It is difficult to explain the silence of the Acts concerning him, especially as he was the companion of Barnabas and Paul in their journey to Jerusalem,[1] unless Ramsay's suggestion that he was a kinsman of St. Luke, who 'thought it right to omit his relative's name, as he did his own, from his history,' be accepted. It must be confessed that the portrait we have of him is indistinct, but the argument from silence is very untrustworthy. Judged by it, Luke himself would also be a man of insignificance. It was Paul's custom to say but little of his most distinguished companions, but when we know the men we see that the silence had a reason, and was really a tribute.

Titus found an opportunity for the exercise of his special gifts in the critical task which fell to his hand at Corinth and Crete. Here a weaker man must have failed, and that fact alone disposes of the theory of insignificance. We are dependent upon the Second Epistle to the Corinthians for the facts

[1] Gal. ii. 1–3.

which provide an insight into his character. Corinth was the church of which Paul had felt a founder's pride. 'I gloried on your behalf,' he writes to them at a later date. That glorying, however, had been rudely disturbed. News had come from Corinth that filled him with sorrow. A shadow was resting upon the church, and a state of affairs tending to moral chaos prevailed. Stephanas and his fellow delegates had to report that the church was lending countenance to wrong-doers. Faction was rife,[1] a grave moral scandal was being tolerated,[2] and unseemliness had crept into the observance of the sacramental ordinance.[3] The position needed strong and tactful handling, and the sternly-sad First Epistle was written and sent by the Corinthian delegates. Timothy was sent to report on the manner of its reception, but his mission was without success. A man of different mould, wise enough to restore unity without appearing to have that object in view, and strong enough to stamp out heresy and evil, was needed; and Paul, who, as Thurloe said of Cromwell, 'sought out men for places, not places for men,' turned to Titus. And Titus went to Corinth. He went to a disorganized church with the avowed intention of arranging a collection for the poor of the church at Jerusalem, but with the deeper purpose of reconciling and establishing the church at Corinth; and by his discreet and able dealing with the momentous crisis he left it in such a state that the apostle could say, *I was not put to shame, . . . our glorying which I made before Titus, was found to be truth. God comforted us by the coming of Titus; . . . while*

[1] 1 Cor. i. 10–17. [2] 1 Cor. v. 1–13. [3] 1 Cor. xi. 17–34.

he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more.[1] And when another crisis arose at Crete, in a church whose converts were drawn from a people with a malodorous reputation,[2] Paul, remembering what he had done at Corinth, again called in the services of Titus. '*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were lacking.*[3] And what were these things? The election of suitable men for the offices of the Church, the correction of erroneous teaching within the Church, and the suppression of disorder in a people who were hard to control. Such was the work of Titus. He was a conciliator.

For such pacification as he had to effect the first necessary qualification is KNOWLEDGE. It is something worse than unwisdom, it is impertinence, to intervene in any matter the proper significance of which we do not understand. It cannot secure a reconciliation; it cannot even make an impressive appeal, because it cannot claim the respect of either of the contending parties. Yet this ignoring of essential facts is frequently a conspicuous feature in present-day controversy. One has but to read the correspondence in the columns of religious journals in some time of unrest to see how much impossible advice, issuing from obvious crudeness, bad logic, and paltry prejudice, is offered to those who differ. It never heals a wound or solves a problem or re-establishes a friendship. The conciliator must have knowledge. He must be able to see not only his own point of view, but also that of the men whom he wishes to bring together,

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 6, 14. [2] Titus i. 12. [3] Titus i. 5.

and his knowledge of *men* must be as real as his knowledge of facts.

Further, inasmuch as weakness never conciliates, but usually widens the breach, the peacemaker requires STRENGTH. He who sees an obvious wrong, yet, for fear of his own comfort, stands aside and allows it to continue, may gain a reputation for common sense; but in reality his quiescence is unworthy. Peacemaking is a virile calling, and it carries us into paths we would most gladly shun did we but consider ourselves. But there are times when a firm stand has to be taken, and, if all other means of reconciliation fail, the stern rebuke has to be spoken. In all this the supreme purpose is to be the harmonizing of discordant lives, and the dominating motive 'that the Church of God suffer no reproach.'

But the strength of the conciliator must be controlled by a wise DISCRIMINATION. When Tacitus named the necessary qualities for a successful leader of men, he gave pride of place to prudence. It is equally needful in the peacemaker. Restraint always adds a glory to strength. In every phase of life that authority which acts without discrimination is in danger of making disastrous blunders, but in nothing is this more likely than in the matter of attempted pacifications. The sword hastily drawn even in a righteous cause may inflict wounds which only the Master's touch can heal. Christian ethics always attaches a high value to prudence, inasmuch as it regulates the aggressive faculties of men, and thus saves them from giving needless offence. Without it an ill-considered action may result, not in the reconciliation of antagonists, but

in exposing the would-be conciliator to the risk of being a partner in the wrong, or a sufferer through it. And such suffering does not merit sympathy. The ancient Eliberitan Council enacted that all those who paid the penalty of death for the interference with heathen worship should not be accounted martyrs although they died for the Faith, because they provoked their own death.

The strength of the peacemaker must be tempered with GENTLENESS. Alone, it has the defects of its virtues. It may become unnecessarily arbitrary and severe, and for this cause it may fail where gentleness and mercy might prevail. 'Is there no way,' queries Andrew Fuller, 'to bring home a wandering sheep but by worrying him to death?' 'Believe evil of no one,' writes Wesley to his helpers. 'Unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.' The sane old rule is not without its bearing upon the precious ministry of reconciliation.

It was the possession of these sterling gifts of knowledge and strength, discretion and clemency that made for the success of the work of Titus; and because they were so wisely used Paul could say of him and of his brethren, '*Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow worker to you-ward; or our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ.*[1]

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 23.

SILAS: THE EDIFIER

Christian saw a picture of a very grave Person hang up against the wall; and this was the fashion of it. It had eyes lifted up to Heaven, the best of Books in his hand, the Law of Truth was written upon his lips, the World was behind his back. It stood as if it pleaded with men, and a Crown of Gold did hang over his head.

BUNYAN.

He bids us build each other up;
  And gathered into one,
To our high calling's glorious hope
  We hand in hand go on. . . .

And if our fellowship below
  In Jesus be so sweet,
What heights of rapture shall we know
  When round His throne we meet!

C. WESLEY.

VII

Silas: the Edifier

When St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, reminding them of the manner and motive of his ministry in their midst, his sense of the fitness of things led him to associate with his own the names of Silas and Timothy, his companions in perilous toil and his kinsmen in the hope of the gospel. 'Ye are witnesses . . . how holily and righteously and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe, . . . exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, to the end that ye should walk worthily of God.'[1] Whatever distinction might have been made, he makes none; the testimony applies equally to all. And it furnishes a clue to the character of Silas; for not only at Thessalonica, and in the company of Paul and Timothy, but everywhere, and with all manner of men, he devoted himself to the task of encouraging the saints. Still, although for a considerable time he was one of the more intimate companions of the apostle, little is said of him, and he is never allowed to speak for himself. He glides about in the dim background of the Acts, only named therein when some circumstance arose which made it necessary, and never mentioned save in company with some one else; apparently a secondary character playing a subordinate part in the stupendous endeavour to evangelize the Gentile world. Yet his was by no means

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 9–12.

an expressionless personality, and his work as an edifier of his brethren lifts him out of the group of the unknown, and makes him something more to us than simply a name.

Before ever he met with Paul, Silas had ' proved his soul.' So much so that when the church at Jerusalem sent the apostolic decree to Antioch he and Judas Barsabbas were appointed to accompany Paul and Barnabas to confirm, by whatever testimony they might deem fit, the judgement of the Council. *We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth.*[1] The Church had come to recognize the worth of these men, and Luke speaks of them as ' chief among the brethren,' and ' prophets.' This latter designation challenges attention. The duties of the prophet in the primitive Church were peculiarly spiritual. ' He that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, comfort, and consolation.'[2] His words might have reference upon occasion to coming events,[3] but he was not a prophet in the sense in which the word is usually understood. His function was that of a preacher and pastor, and as a speaker for God it was his to deal with the needs and problems of those who were in the quest of truth, and to augment the work of the evangelist by building up their faith, stimulating and strengthening their will, and allaying their fears.

For such a calling certain qualities of heart and mind were requisite. No man could be entrusted by the Church with the cure of souls who had not Holiness and Ability. Gifts and graces were alike demanded. It was an important vocation,

[1] Acts xv. 27. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 3. [3] Acts xi. 28, xxi. 10.

next in order to that of an apostle.[1] For this work the church at Jerusalem had chosen Silas, a man well endowed and highly esteemed, and had set him apart. The reason, therefore, why he was chosen as a guarantor of the apostolic decree is clear, for, like Stephen, he was 'full of faith and the Holy Ghost, . . . full of grace and power.'

For a brief moment Luke draws aside the veil and reveals these representatives of the mother Church engaged in their splendid work of edification at Antioch. *Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.*[2] It is a sentence which implies much, for the united effect of the decree and the assurances of those who bore it smoothed away those difficulties which, in a composite Christian community where Jew and Greek were trying to find a mutual ground of fellowship, would have ended in discontent and disorder. This work was not done in a day, but when it was accomplished they return to Jerusalem to report.[3]

Then Judas drops out of the record, but not so Silas. He had seen the work of grace in a Gentile community, and he had felt the spell of Paul.

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 21; Eph. iv. 11. [2] Acts xv. 32.

[3] There is an interesting reading in one or two early MSS. at ver. 34 of Acts xv. which the A.V. includes: 'Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.' Ramsay accepts this as genuine, but it has the appearance of an explanatory gloss to prepare the way for ver. 40. The distance from Antioch to Jerusalem was not great, and considering the weight of authorities against the reading, together with the eccentricities of Codex Bezae in the Acts, a journey thither, as implied in ver. 33, is most in accordance with Luke's meaning; while a subsequent return satisfactorily explains his presence in Antioch later.

Therefore he returns to Antioch. And when the break between Paul and Barnabas occurred he was there ready to take the place of Mark and share the hardships of Paul's heroic project in and for the Roman world.

It is in this association that Silas is seen to best advantage. Though chosen by the apostle for the arduous task of the second missionary journey, it must not be understood that he consented blindly and impulsively. His response was rather that of his own QUIET AND DEEP CONVICTION, and it was perfectly voluntary. And when they set out together, their purpose was one that lay near to his heart. They desired to confirm the Churches and gain new trophies for the Cross. And as they journeyed and laboured the range of the work so grew that they set aside their earlier plans and, in obedience to the will of God, carried the gospel into Europe. The rapid movements of Acts xv. 40–xvi. 12 make it impossible for the reader to grasp the greatness of this undertaking unless the places mentioned are closely followed by the aid of a map. That tour through Asia Minor which is dismissed in a verse or two was no easy matter. What patience and endurance and devotion to the will of God are hinted at in the swiftly moving record! Had it pleased St. Luke to have been more explicit, what revealings might we not have had of that eventful journey! But he is eager to get the feet of Paul upon European soil, and in his haste he contents himself with the simple statement that *as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So*

the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.[1] But even in this, however impatient he may be, Luke does not overlook the significant thing in all that journeying—the edification of the Churches.

And so we trace them to Philippi, where, in a memorable scene, Silas comes into his own. In Acts xvi. 16–40 he escapes the shadow, and we see in him a fine vein of CHEERFUL FORTITUDE. Opposition had come from an unexpected source. A merciful act of Paul, which clashed with the profit-making of a few heartless men, led to their being unjustly beaten and imprisoned. The jailer, zealous in the discharge of his duties, thrust them into the foul inner prison, and secured their feet in the stocks. It is under conditions such as these that the strength of a man's courage and the reality of his trust in God are tested. They had been treated shamefully ; their cause had not been investigated ; and, although Roman citizens, they had suffered the ignominy of scourging. Surely theirs was a sufficient reason for complaint ! Yet what do we find ? Instead of repining, they fill the prison with the sound of their prayer and praise. *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*[2] Now, that was the evidence of a sustaining faith. Only a few hours before, as they had stood in the presence of a cruel wrong, they had been moved to pity ; and now that they were suffering for their humane intervention they realize in the dark cell the sufficiency of that grace which can turn a prison into a sanctuary and can give men a triumph over adversity. But

[1] Acts xvi. 4, 5. [2] Acts xvi. 25.

what was the nature of their prayer? Is it not a superficial judgement to assume that its limit was for their own deliverance? May it not have been for their persecutors and slanderers that God would turn their hearts? Whatever its burden may have been, we can understand the prayer that arises from trouble; but what of the song? And, though it may be idle to conjecture, who started the singing? We know how Paul in later years enjoins the duty of cheerfulness upon those who suffer adversity. We call to mind those exhortations which shine like lustrous stars in a sky otherwise cold and dark. But may it not have been from Silas that the suggestion came, and that in the prison at Philippi the apostle of good cheer learned the secret of turning sorrow into song? Be that as it may, they prayed and sang together—prayer first, be it noted, and song afterwards, song arising out of prayer—for though their feet were fast in the stocks, it is beyond the device of men to fetter the spirit of those who trust in God and seek their fellowship in Him. And such cheerfulness is a Christian privilege. 'This also let us do,' writes Chrysostom, 'and we shall open for ourselves—not a prison, but heaven.' Or as Jeremy Taylor says of the grace of contentedness, 'I am fallen into the hands of publicans and sequestrators, and they have taken all from me: what now? Let me look about me. . . . They have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them.' My charity to them! So was it with Paul and Silas.

The needs of the jailer were not overlooked when the doors of the prison were opened. It needed not barred doors and binding stocks to keep them when to escape would be inhuman. They abide—abide to bless. And afterwards, when they had vindicated their rights as Roman citizens, nothing could make them swerve from their work of edifying, and they could not leave Philippi without seeing and exhorting the brethren.

The rest, so far as Silas is concerned, is soon told. From Philippi they pass to Thessalonica, where a riot brought their labours prematurely to a close.[1] They go on to Beroea, where a threatening of further trouble necessitates the departure of Paul[2]; but Silas remains in the company of Timothy until after Paul's experience at Athens, when they both join him at Corinth.[3] From that point Silas disappears from the Acts. As we trace him from place to place, we have evidence of his zeal as an evangelist; but as an edifier he needed gifts of mind and heart of which we get no suggestion in any reference to him. But in all the strenuous and perilous days in which he companied with Paul he spent himself in this simple and necessary work of speaking to men 'edification, and comfort, and consolation.'

[1] Acts xvii. 1–9. [2] Acts xvii. 14. [3] Acts xviii. 5.

STEPHEN: THE CONFESSOR

I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven.

Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain head—

Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenchèd fire.

He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorned, and bruised with stones:

But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.

TENNYSON.

VIII

Stephen: the Confessor

In the life of nearly every man there are some events of such importance as to establish themselves in the memory never to disappear. They belong to to-day almost as much as to the day on which they were first enacted, and, according to their character, they suffuse the past with a golden haze or cast over it shadows of regret. Paul knew what it was to be carried back to the glories and the shames of earlier days. On the one hand, we find him frequently reverting to that day of days when the exceeding brightness of the Divine Presence enfolded him, and when he was claimed for that service he had pledged himself to destroy. In the fact lying in the background of that remembrance he found the vindication of his apostleship, and in the remembrance itself he discovered the springs of inspiration which sustained him throughout his unique and exacting ministry. Paul knew something of the glory of the unforgettable. And on the other hand, although he ultimately escaped its pain, he knew something of its bitterness also. With just as much frequency he goes back to the time when, with fierce, intolerant zeal, he made havoc of the Church. He recalled the familiar faces of those he sought and slew. He could never forget that madness the consequences of which were so irrevocable. And he made no attempt to conceal how keenly he felt the shame of his mistake. We get a

glimpse of his sorrow, and are able to infer therefrom how deeply the iron had entered into his soul, when, in the confession he made to his incensed countrymen at Jerusalem, he tells how he poured out his distress on this account to God: *I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee.* But one name stood out from among all the rest: *And when the blood of Stephen Thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him.*[1] What would he not have given—and that a thousand times over—in all the days when he was doing a kindred work to that for which Stephen had been stoned to have had at his side that ardent, capable soul to whose martyrdom he had consented, and in which he had found a zealot's satisfaction! That was the sorrow of it all. He had consented to the death of the man whose comradeship in after years would have been beyond price. Among the things which fill us with dismay as we reflect upon the issues of an act we would fain forget, none is more distressing than the surmisings of what might have been had we acted differently. Only one thing can silence our self-condemnations and give us peace. And concerning that St. John has said the fitting word, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.'[2]

The man who thus dwelt in the memory of St. Paul cannot be silently passed over in a study of the Pauline characters. Stephen stands at the parting of the ways in the spiritual history of the apostle. The finger-post stands before we come to the

[1] Acts xxii. 19, 20. [2] 1 John iii. 19, 20.

divergence of the roads, but it points the way nevertheless. For a time Saul of Tarsus may pursue his relentless course, but all the while the influence of the martyr is secretly working upon his mind. The death of Stephen provided the first impulse in Paul's Christward way, the unique manner of his conversion notwithstanding. The scene of the martyrdom burned itself upon his brain. Go where he might, do what he would, he could not dismiss that face which, turning from the hate of earth, caught the glory of the Lord and glowed with heavenly lustre. It was not a face racked with pain that he remembered, but one transfigured with triumph : the face, as it were, *of an angel*.[1] Saul the Pharisee beheld that day the surpassing wonder of the sustaining power of the Christian hope—and he could not forget ! 'Stephen,' it has been said 'and not Gamaliel, was the real master of St. Paul.'[2] And again, 'We cannot dissociate the martyrdom of Stephen from the conversion of Paul.'[3]

What manner of man, then, was this whose influence was so abiding ? As St. Luke relates his story—and may he not have been indebted to Paul for his facts ?—one descriptive word recurs with such persistence as to arrest attention. It focuses thought upon the distinctive quality of Stephen's religious experience—ITS COMPLETENESS. A crisis in the church at Jerusalem brought him into prominence. Complaints had been made by the Greek-speaking Jews to the effect that in the daily distribution of food partiality had been shown to the

[1] Acts vi. 15. [2] Rackham, *The Acts*, p. 88.
[3] Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 62.

widows of the Palestinian Jews, while their own had been neglected; and, as a consequence, at the suggestion of the Twelve, seven men were chosen to act as almoners of the Church's goods. And it is significant of the broadmindedness of the Church that each of the seven bore a Greek name. Thus everything had been done in the interests of the Hellenists[1] so that there should be no further cause for dissatisfaction. First upon the list of those chosen was Stephen, and of him alone does St. Luke give any particular characterization. The apostles had demanded *men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom*,[2] and the Church had responded by choosing such men as Stephen, *full of faith and of the Holy Spirit . . . full of grace and power*.[3] In that demand and response are enshrined the qualities which befit men for service in the Kingdom of God. Observe what these phrases attribute to Stephen. He was irreproachable in reputation, wise in administration, gracious in manner, irrefutable in defence of the Faith, unwavering in spiritual conviction, and aglow with the Spirit of God. It is to the honour of the Church that she has always had *some* within her ranks who have maintained this high standard. And she has many others who possess *one or more* of these endowments. But Luke's portrait of Stephen is no mere composite of the Seven. All these things were to be found in him, and found in their completeness. That threefold use of the word 'full' is not accidental. It is an anticipation, or perhaps more correctly an echo, of the Pauline doctrine of πλήρωμα.[4] And the

[1] i.e. Greek-speaking Jews. [2] Acts vi. 3. [3] Acts vi. 5, 8.
[4] i.e. 'fullness.' Cf. John i. 16; Eph. iii. 19; Phil. i. 11.

doctrine is translated into a life. Luke saw in Stephen something more than a promise; he recognized a fullness. And the virtues which dwelt in him so richly, and made him the man so needful to the Church, owed their presence to that essential thing, the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Such was the kind of man the primitive Church sought to occupy even the lowliest place in her service. Nothing is said of the family from which Stephen came; nothing of his social status. He may have been a man of good birth; he certainly was a man of education. But, desirable as these things are, the Church had her eyes upon the man himself, and, knowing him to be worthy, she testified to his fitness by electing him to service. That is why Stephen was chosen. The Church could not have passed over such a man without bringing reproach upon herself.

The next thing to which St. Luke calls attention concerning Stephen is THE MIGHT, THE MAJESTY EVEN, OF HIS MINISTRY. He is shown in an altogether unexpected light. We have seen him appointed to the lowliest task in the Church, and his credentials are such that we are prepared to find him an acceptable deacon. And we expect to hear nothing more of complaint from the Hellenists. We have looked for this, and little more. But a 'full' man is constantly surprising us—surprising us when we ought not to be surprised. Consider those gifts of his, and the marvel that he sought to use them becomes no marvel at all. The distinctive thing about grace is that it overflows. You can no more confine it to restricted tasks and rigid forms than you can hold ever-increasing waters in a tiny

reservoir at the foot of the hills. Stephen was a deacon by the will of man, but he was an apostle by the grace of God. And in the lowly work of ministering to the needy within the Church he discovered that he was capable of other service and wider usefulness. So the deacon became preacher, and the preacher apologist. *And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*[1] And all the while he is preaching and debating he is still a deacon; the preaching and debating were simply the extras of his service. The poor in the Church were not neglected for the sake of the debate in the synagogue. The development came quite naturally—it may be unconsciously. Stephen did not press himself into prominence; he simply followed the divine impulse within him, and the Twelve offered no hindrance to the exercise of his gifts. It may be that no such thing occurred to them, but it has occurred to men of later days. When, in 1742, Wesley sought to restrain Thomas Maxfield from preaching because he had not been episcopally ordained, his mother said, 'Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him yourself.' So it may have been with the Twelve and Stephen. They

[1] Acts vi. 8–10.

heard him, and they recognized a man filled with the Spirit of God ; they examined the fruits of his preaching, and were satisfied concerning the call of God. Had there been a prejudice in their mind, it could not have survived such a test. Grace and fruits bear witness to the sanction of God. Stephen caught the ear of the multitude, and the synagogue became a place of living interest because therein a man full of wisdom and of the Spirit was proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. Those matched against him—and may not Saul have been among their number ? [1]—had to acknowledge themselves at a loss to answer him. But there is a type of disputant which does not hesitate to stoop to unworthy means when worsted in argument. When argument is met and overwhelmed by mightier argument, there is always persecution left. And persecution need not be honest in its statements. So Stephen is charged with disloyalty to the law ; his defence is cut short by angry cries, and an hour of frenzy robs the Church of one who might have been another Paul ! And all the while the Church was proclaiming a triumphant Lord and an Omnipotent Father. Did the death of Stephen harmonize with these beliefs ? Was it worth while that he should succeed in the synagogue if his success should provoke in others a lust for blood ? There need be but one answer. The hour of triumph for the enemies of the Church was to be followed by a period of dismay. Standing near that place of blood, listening, beholding, consenting, was one who little dreamed of the issues of that day. Stephen was dead, and God was preparing Saul for

[1] His birthplace, Tarsus, was the capital of Cilicia.

the coming days. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.' And the seed of the Kingdom fell that day into a heart hot with hate, but an honest heart notwithstanding the hate. And thirty years afterwards this same man, after a life spent in the proclamation of the good tidings, also sealed his testimony to the Faith with his own blood!

So far the *service* of Stephen; but could he *suffer*? Not that it would detract from the service were there no capacity for heroic and glorious suffering. But wherever such capacity does exist the service itself catches the glory. And St. Luke has shown us that in the suffering of Stephen there was something of THE TRUE IMITATION OF CHRIST. *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*[1] And that, says St. Peter,[2] is the Christian way of suffering wrongfully. And in such suffering Stephen was sustained by the remembrance of that patience which endured upon the cross; yea, that endured the cross itself. And because the spirit of the Master was so manifestly his, the words of the Master became his also.[3] In the hour of translation he was exalted above the fury of the mob, and was granted a glimpse of the heavenlies and the glory that awaited him. In his pain, and in his triumph, prayer for his murderers trembled on his lips. And a young man named Saul was standing by![4]

[1] Acts vii. 59, 60. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 19–24.
[3] Luke xxiii. 34, 46.
[4] Si Stephanus non orasset
Ecclesia Paulum non haberet.

Thus Stephen *died.* But note this carefully : St. Luke does not use that word. He rounds off the scene of terror with this surpassing phrase : *He fell asleep.*

AQUILA: THE GRACIOUS

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.

WORDSWORTH.

In the stress of an exacting and unromantic occupation, fidelity tests itself more completely than in those high places of the world which are coveted for their softness. It is true that every position in life calls forth its own groups of specialized virtues; but the true, deep, comprehensive qualities of character are best developed by a lot of average toil, and men sometimes shun the lot because of its searching ordeals.

T. G. SELBY.

IX

Aquila: the Gracious

As it was but a day's journey by sea or land, it was natural that after his unexpected failure at Athens Paul should make his way to Corinth, and the words with which St. Luke introduces this new phase of the apostle's labours, and which seem to serve simply the linking together of two strangely different experiences in his ministry, are seen, when closely studied, to possess very real deeps. *After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.*[1]

Athens and Corinth! How tremendous was the contrast of these famous cities! And how significant in the history of St. Paul! But a month before he had entered Athens under the impulse of a dearly cherished hope, only to leave it with the depressing sense of the collapse of his desire heavy upon him. There, where everything had promised so favourably, nothing had eventuated—nothing but failure. How clearly does this reflect the discipline by which God perfects His toilers! That is not always failure which wears its guise; and concerning Paul himself, who would care to say that this defeat at Athens was not a step in his spiritual development? 'I had failed had I never failed' is at once an illuminating and an enheartening confession. However true this may be, it is almost certain that it was wide of the apostle's thought on

[1] Acts xviii. 1.

the day he wended his way from Athens to Corinth. He had failed, and the man in him was disappointed and distressed, not for his own sake merely, but for Athens' sake and the gospel's.

But one thought would fill his mind—that of his possible reception at Corinth. He had hoped for much from Athens, but the supercilious city had refused to take him seriously. It had given him a hearing of a kind, but more with the purpose of being amused than of being impressed. And then, the novelty having vanished, it had left him to himself, and had practically bowed him out. What, then, could he hope for from Corinth—the city so notoriously in the grip of the vices? Surely little. Yet, as the after-events revealed, this city of such unfavourable prospect became one of the foremost in response to his message, and throughout its extreme and often painful vicissitudes it occupied a constant place in his solicitude. But a few miles separated the two great cities, yet their geographical nearness was their only point of affinity. In every other particular they were as sundered as the poles. Athens was the centre of the world's learning, and thither those with a desire for knowledge turned their faces; Corinth was the heart of its commerce, and there the fortune-seekers gathered together. Athens was proud and exclusive; Corinth cosmopolitan and inviting. And as the heart of Paul was troubled over the idolatry of the one, so his zeal was kindled at the profligacy of the other. At Athens his sojourn was significantly brief; but at Corinth he spent two eventful years, and to those won for righteousness from so apparently unpromising a place he wrote those Epistles which have done more to

perpetuate the name of the city than all its policy and wealth and worldly progress.

It was here that he met Aquila and Priscilla. *He found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome ; and he came unto them ; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought ; for by their trade they were tent-makers.*[1] The facts require but little elucidation. In the interests of business Aquila had found his way to Rome, where he married Priscilla, who, because of her dignified name and the prominence given her in Acts xviii. 18, 26, Rom. xvi. 3, 2 Tim. iv. 19, is supposed to have been his superior in rank and intelligence. This may have been, although it hardly admits of proof. And it is a detail compared with the greater fact that, whatever her advantages of birth and mind may have been,

> . . . she set herself to man
> Like perfect music unto noble words ;

and they, of all the Pauline characters with the exception of Philemon and Apphia, represent the ideal relationship of a happy married life, inasmuch as there was a kinship of spirit and aim and deed between them. Neither Luke nor Paul ever thinks of either of these apart from the other ; their names are as truly wedded as their lives.

It is impossible to determine the length of their sojourn in Rome, but it was sufficiently long to enable them to get a clear grasp of the religious situation, and the information they could supply

[1] Acts xviii. 2, 3.

would be of real value to St. Paul. During that time the Jews had been in a state of turbulence, and to quell the unrest Claudius issued an impracticable edict demanding their withdrawal from the imperial city. In obedience to that command Aquila and his wife migrate to Corinth. To them at the time it could be no other than an unfortunate circumstance. Yet in the after years it would glow before them transfigured with the very romance of providence. Out of misfortune they would see the purposes of God taking shape. Just as the decree of Caesar Augustus had led Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem for the fulfilling of prophecy, so the edict of Claudius had sent them to Corinth for the furthering of the Evangel! 'The things which happened unto me,' Paul writes to the Philippians, 'have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel.'[1] The key of our perplexities is in the hand of God!

It is open to question whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians when they left Rome; and seeing that Aquila is still called a Jew, the weight of authority appears to be on the negative side. The inference, however, is precarious, inasmuch as a Jew who became a Christian would still be regarded politically as a Jew. Race and not faith would determine the matter. Still, one inclines to the view that it was in Corinth that, through the preaching of Paul and the testimony of his life, he and Priscilla came to embrace Christianity. By whatever means they were led to the Faith it matters little, but it is beyond dispute that, having accepted it, they adorned it with singular grace; and among the

[1] Phil. i. 12.

group of Paul's helpers, while many may have been more illustrious, few were more consistent and more timely with their aid.

The ministry of Aquila and Priscilla was a limited one, yet the range of its influence was immeasurable. It was a ministry of loving solicitude, of bracing, care-destroying graciousness. In all the ages and in every circle of life it is given to some rare souls to render highest service through the consecration and generous use of common virtues; their simple bravery and their unfailing cheerfulness inspire a kindred courage and optimism in lives which without them would be baffled and undone. They touch life only to nerve it to higher, vaster issues. Yet in every other particular the helped outdistance the helpers. Of such a class were Aquila and Priscilla, whose ministry was so great because so gracious.

Take, for example, their relationship with Paul. In this they displayed A RARE QUALITY OF GENEROSITY. Few agencies bring men of kindred sympathies more closely together than persecution or poverty. Within the Church of the apostolic age the practice of giving hospitality was one of the bonds of brotherhood without which many a disciple, when migrating from town to town, would have jeopardized his safety. And the same practice would obtain among the Jews who were alienated from the fatherland; and it is their racial kinship and the fact that they were of the same trade, rather than their fellowship in the gospel, that Luke fastens upon when sketching Paul's early days in Aquila's home at Corinth. Paul was a Jew and a tent-maker—that was his sole claim upon Aquila.

But it was enough. The apostle suggests in his Epistles the hardships of those days, how by working night and day they contrived to make a bare livelihood without his being a burden to the poor Christian communities; but that statement glows with meaning when it is remembered that Aquila shared with Paul the labour which scarcely provided sustenance for both. His was a fine type of generosity, inasmuch as it was silent and veiled. For while it is true that Paul laboured with his hands, it must also be remembered that he was preacher and teacher too, and his preaching and teaching were not all done on the Sabbath. And Aquila and Priscilla would plan times of quiet and release for this without allowing him to suspect their perfectly disguised purposes. Their home was more than a lodging for him, and he was made to eat their bread and share their kindliness without ever being made to feel his dependence. It is more than probable that had Paul found no friend in Corinth to play so generous a part for him his long sojourn there would have been impossible. That he repaid them in a currency of greater worth than gold, by his example and teaching and prayers, is very true; but in their friendship there was no thought of gain. Everything had been done for Paul's own sake and the gospel's. *Salute Priscilla and Aquila my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles,* he writes to the church at Rome, and then adds the intensely instructive sentence, *and salute the church that is in their house.*[1] It was a tribute worthy of the heart

[1] Rom. xvi. 3–5.

of Paul, and one which Aquila and his noble wife had fully merited. For the apostle's sake they had risked their own security—possibly during the Ephesian riot—and now at Rome he knew that their home was one of the meeting-places of the Church. Aquila and Priscilla kept open doors for the Lord's saints, and in a twofold sense their home became a sanctuary—for shelter and for worship.

We have another example of their graciousness in their relationship with Apollos. In this they displayed A WINSOME TACTFULNESS. When Paul set out for Galatia to visit and strengthen the churches, they accompany him as far as Ephesus, where they remain. In due course Apollos also came to Ephesus, and began to teach in the synagogue.[1] But Priscilla and Aquila detected in his teaching an ignorance of the fullness of the gospel; and, risking a possible rebuff, they opened their home to him, and instructed him more perfectly in the way of the Lord. It was a delicate and a hazardous task to undertake; but it was done with such admirable tact and good taste that the critic was lost in the teacher, and Apollos became mighty in the service of his Lord. But behind all his success lies the unsuspected influence of Aquila and Priscilla. Surely in the garnering-time the joy of the reapers will be shared by those who have sown. And in that day obscure service will receive its due recognition and its full reward!

[1] Acts xviii. 24–26.

APOLLOS: THE APOLOGIST

Such was the preaching mechanic [Christian David] whom Wesley, the scholar and the priest, embraced every opportunity of hearing during his Herrnhut visit—a fair specimen of scores in England whom Wesley, during the next half-century, employed in the same glorious work. The philosopher may sneer at the sight of one of the most distinguished fellows of Lincoln College sitting in the Herrnhut chapel and in the carpenter's cottage to be taught by a man like this; but let it be remembered that while the Oxford student, in letters, was immeasurably superior to the German mechanic, the German mechanic was as much superior to the Oxford student in the science of saving truth, and besides that, he spoke not only from clear convictions, but from personal experience. Even now any man, profoundly learned in languages and in philosophy, might receive knowledge more important than any he already has, if he would condescend to imitate Wesley's example, and stoop to be taught by some poor itinerating preacher, who, though a wayfaring man, and in all other things a fool, is yet 'wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'

LUKE TYERMAN.

X

Apollos: the Apologist

Apollos is at once one of the most alluring and elusive of all the companions of St. Paul. As we read St. Luke's description of him, we are made to feel that he was a man of splendid promise, the kind of man of whom we cherish large expectations. And the surprising thing about him is that, with the exception of a solitary paragraph in the Acts and the references to his work at Corinth[1] and his presence at Crete,[2] he is altogether lost to our view. And that throws a welcome light upon the silences of Holy Scripture, and fills the untold with all manner of golden probabilities. Men of the type of Apollos may escape the historian, but it is unthinkable that the silence covers a descent to the commonplace. There was something distinctive and remarkable about Apollos, and had Luke been his biographer, the full story of his life and ministry would have been choice and absorbing reading. But Luke places upon himself definite limitations, and Apollos, whom the Corinthians set side by side with Peter and Paul, is passed by with but one crowded and dignified reference.

But despite this unexpected refrainment on the part of Luke, and in a sense upon that of Paul also, there are moments when the mists part and disclose Apollos. And first we see in him A Noble Purpose Lacking an Adequate Equipment. *A certain*

[1] 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 5, 6. [2] Titus iii. 13.

Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue.[1] Now, what brought Apollos to Ephesus? The most obvious answer is, the claims of business. But if this is true, those claims had a very slight hold upon him, for as soon as occasion arose he was ready to pass on to Corinth for a definitely religious work. In the absence of any positive statement, the opinion may be advanced that he came to Ephesus with an equally religious purpose in view. Ephesus possessed attractions likely to appeal to this learned and zealous Jew, and with all the passion of a teacher and an apologist in his soul he made his way thither, intent upon proving to the Jews that in Jesus their own Messianic prophecies had received their fulfilment. It was a noble mission, and it had as its object the enthronement of that Lord he so imperfectly understood.

And with such a purpose in view, what were the constituents of his equipment? Three grades of knowledge, each excellent and desirable, but together inadequate. In the first place, there was *the equivalent of a University education*. He was a learned Alexandrian. There is, unfortunately, no English word which conveys all that is meant by λόγιος, a term which involves not only knowledge but also ability to set it forth with ease and grace; and we are driven to adopt either the picturesque

[1] Acts xviii. 24–26.

'eloquent' of the Authorized Version or the more sombre 'learned' of the Revisers. What is wanted is a word which blends both ideas, for in Apollos there was a fine quality of mind allied with a rare natural facility of speech. Alexandria was a city after Apollos's heart. It set a high value upon learning and art; it had a famous library; and it was the home of a virile philosophy. At the time when Apollos was but a youth the ardent and erudite Jew Philo was exerting an unforgettable influence upon Jewish theology by striving to free it from the absurdities which reduced the most vital things in the Faith of his fathers to allegory, and by impregnating it with the philosophy of Plato. Such were the influences which swathed the soul of Apollos in his earliest days, and it was inevitable that his impressionable mind should absorb the intellectualism of his native city and adopt its philosophic cast. And when he came to Ephesus he was in possession of that essential thing in the equipment of an apologist—a sound and liberal education. Then, further, there was his *knowledge of revealed truth*, a knowledge so thorough that a careful writer like St. Luke does not hesitate to call him 'mighty in the Scriptures.' It was this profound acquaintance of his with the Old Testament that led Luther to make his attractive guess that he was the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it may be said in passing that, apart altogether from the method of that unique treatise, it contains phrases which, although they may be nothing more than striking coincidences, reflect the innermost experiences of Apollos when he first set foot in Ephesus. 'For when by reason of the time ye

ought to be teachers, ye have need that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God.'[1] And again, 'Wherefore let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection.'[2] But this is a side issue in no wise vital to our study. The fact to be grasped is that Apollos was thoroughly conversant with the Word of God. And that reveals him in his student days in Alexandria, aroused by some chance thing he had heard and anxious to search and discover for himself what was the mind and will of God. In those days he was seeking a firm foothold for his faith. And that too is a necessary thing for an apologist. Then, finally, there was his *elementary knowledge of the Christian Faith.* During his quest for truth it was his good fortune to discover some who had heard of the ministry of the Baptist; and though what he learned from them was of a rudimentary character, he welcomed it as the light for which his soul was searching. He was on the threshold of the first principles, and knew nothing of any greater thing. He was in the dimness of the dawn, and he mistook it for noonday. The phrase 'knowing only the baptism of John' leaves us in ignorance as to where the boundaries of his knowledge of the Christian Faith really reached. Had he a doctrine of the Cross? Did he know of John's witness to Jesus, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?[3] Even if this be granted, everything was in a haze, and he was an imperfect witness. Like the twelve disciples of John of whom St. Luke speaks in the next chapter,[4] he had not grasped the fact of Pentecost, and knew

[1] Heb. v. 12. [2] Heb. vi. 1. [3] John i. 29. [4] Acts xix. 1–7.

nothing of a greater baptism than that of John. Yet what he knew he preached. His intention was beyond criticism, but his equipment was incomplete. How reminiscent of Wesley's comment on his missionary endeavours in Georgia, 'I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God,' especially in the light of the later note, 'I am not sure of this'! Apollos went to Ephesus to teach others, and he learned that he himself stood in need of a teacher.

This brings us to the outstanding trait in his character. His was A CHOICE SPIRIT WHICH WELCOMED A FULLER REVELATION even when it came in the way of a correction. *When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully.*[1] And Priscilla and Aquila were tent-makers. That helps us to understand Apollos. We may measure the quality of any soul by its attitude toward intelligent and gracious criticism. A man of smaller mind would have resented an intervention from such a source. But there was a beautiful simplicity about this Alexandrian scholar, and if the tent-makers had anything to teach him he was eager to learn. How often has this been repeated! Augustine sits at the feet of Simplicianus; Wesley listens to the testimony of Christian David; and Moody pays heed to two devout women who prayed that he might be filled with the Spirit. 'I need the power!' said Moody years after. 'Why, I thought I had power. I had the largest congregation in Chicago, and there were many conversions. I was in a sense satisfied. But right along those two godly women kept praying for

[1] Acts xviii. 26.

me, and their earnest talk about anointing for special service set me thinking. I asked them to come and talk with me, and they poured out their hearts in prayer that I might receive the filling of the Holy Spirit. There came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. I began to cry out as I never did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service.' Moody's biographer calls that the critical experience in his life. The power came. 'I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths; and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world—it would be as the small dust of the balance.' That is where Apollos stood, and because he hungered for the added grace he was too wise to despise the channel through which it came.

We have another example of the fineness of his spirit in his attitude toward St. Paul. He had preached in Corinth, and an undesirable faction had arisen in the Church. Great names were set in opposition to each other, and things were tending to chaos. In the meantime Apollos had returned to Ephesus, and at a later point Paul writes to the Corinthians telling them that he had endeavoured to persuade Apollos to visit Corinth again, but without immediate success. *But as touching Apollos the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all his will to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity.*[1] At first sight that seems to indicate

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

a conflict between the two. But it is not really so. No shadow rests upon these men in all this unfortunate matter. Paul still trusted Apollos and called him brother. And Apollos refused to return, fearing that his presence might lead to further dissension. He advanced a surface reason which was perfectly true, but there was a deeper motive ; he would give no countenance to anything which had the semblance of party-spirit. Apollos would say with just as much feeling and truth as St. Paul, *What then is Apollos ? and what is Paul ? Ministers through whom ye believed ; and each as the Lord gave to him.*[1]

And the simile the apostle uses, *I planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase,* indicates the distinction between his own ministry and that of his friend. Paul was an evangelist by the will of God, and an apologist by the force of circumstances ; but Apollos felt from the first that He was Called of God for the Defence of the Faith. And as such his work was auxiliary to that of the evangelist and not in conflict with it. And to such a calling he devoted his great gifts of learning and eloquence and grace. *He helped them much which had believed through grace, for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*[2]

Such, then, was Apollos the gradual Christian ; who stored his mind with the best that Alexandria had to give ; who, guided by the Bible of his day, groped his way into the dim light of the morning ; who welcomed the brighter shining ; and then consecrated all he was and all he had to the supreme

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. [2] Acts xviii. 27, 28.

endeavour of confirming his brethren in their most holy Faith, and of proving to his unbelieving kinsmen that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ.

PHILEMON: THE MERCIFUL

That must have been a great intellect, and closely conversant with the Fountain of all light and beauty, which could shape the profound and far-reaching teachings of the Epistle to the Colossians, and pass from them to the graceful simplicity and sweet kindliness of this exquisite letter; as if Michael Angelo had gone straight from smiting his magnificent Moses from the marble mass to incise some delicate and tiny figure of Love or Friendship on a cameo.

DR. ALEX. MACLAREN.

We are all God's Onesimuses. LUTHER.

We do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.

SHAKESPEARE.

XI

Philemon : the Merciful

We should have known nothing of Philemon as a friend of St. Paul had he not been the owner of a runaway slave. The insubordination and escape of Onesimus had been a disturbing episode in the home at Colossae ; but apart from its influence upon other servants of the household, and the grief it would cause Philemon that one who had shared the benefits of his home—perhaps from infancy—should have proved himself unprofitable and void of gratitude, that was apparently the end of the matter. Not for a moment did he dream that something of undying fame would come to him from an incident he would gladly have forgotten. And even in the after years, when reconciliation between master and servant had been effected, it was scarcely to be expected that the mediating letter, which he had preserved solely because it came from Paul, could have gained such distinction as to become an imperishable fragment of Holy Scripture. In the wide range of the world's affairs the restoration of Onesimus was a thing of insignificance, a trivial and commonplace happening, neither claiming nor meriting permanent remembrance. So it seemed ; yet it has proved far otherwise. For this Epistle which made reconciliation possible, this letter of a few vibrant sentences of tender, dignified, and importunate pleading, has defined for all subsequent ages what is the true type of a Christian gentleman

and what the perfect method of Christian forgiveness.

But why an Epistle at all? Philemon was a member of the Colossian Church; his house was the meeting-place of the saints, and Tychicus was bearing to the Colossians an Epistle dealing with their affairs. It would have been so easy to have dismissed the matter of Onesimus's return with a sentence or two in that Epistle, commending him to the clemency of his master, and beseeching Philemon to restore him in the spirit of meekness! Why, then, go to the trouble of a private letter? Because of Paul's wise and human heart; because to his ardent soul, bent upon effecting a gracious reconciliation, thought of personal trouble became obliterated; and because he knew that there are times when matters indirectly affecting the life of the Church can be dealt with to greatest advantage apart from its councils. Paul put nothing human from himself, and this letter came from his humanness. All the while he was writing it he had Onesimus in his mind. And he knew how publicity can sting a sensitive soul. Publicity of a certain order Onesimus was bound to meet, but it need not become a matter for the deliberations of the Church. The apostle knew that he was sending back Philemon's slave, but he also knew that Onesimus was something more than that, a new creation in Christ Jesus. And so, having the right to command, he pleads—pleads privately as friend with friend—and the success of this method of conciliation shows that it might well become a principle among Christian people for the lasting good of the Church.

Onesimus was a slave, but in the times in which he lived slavery differed widely; at its lowest it was wretched and degrading, but in the hands of more humane masters it was at least tolerable. From the ranks of the sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire physicians, teachers, poets, and artists were nurtured; and to these consideration and kindness were usually shown. And in the household of Philemon there can be little doubt that these things held sway. But no amount of personal comfort can adequately compensate for personal liberty. Manhood always keeps a low level when shorn of choice. But with that Paul is not at the moment concerned. He is thinking more of the reparation Onesimus owed to Philemon, and the mercy Philemon owed to Onesimus, seeing that each was the 'bondslave' of one common Lord and the sharer of a common faith. Yet all the while, to those who are able to see beneath the surface of a supposed indifference to a problem which later generations came to understand as one of the great social questions whose solution was in the hands of the Christian religion, Lightfoot's saying that '"emancipation" seems to be trembling on his lips' is unquestionably true! Great reforms never come until the times are ripe for them, and they are never advanced by rash and indiscriminate advocacy! Hence Paul adopts the only course open to a wise mind. *Masters*, he writes in a grand paragraph addressed to the Church of which Philemon was himself a member, *give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*[1] A Master in heaven!

[1] Col. iv. 1.

With such a model the nature of slavery in a Christian home was practically settled. The apostle has something equally as pertinent to say from the human point of view, and he does not hesitate to say it. He calls this converted slave *a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.*[1] *Thou shouldest receive him for ever,* he writes to Philemon, *not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.*[2] Would not men do well before they blame him for his hesitation in the use of that word 'emancipation' if they would challenge their willingness to carry out the logical issue of the phrases, 'one of you,' 'a brother beloved'? We may have outdistanced him in the question of liberty, but we linger behind him in matters of equality and fraternity! A brother beloved! Everything is conceded in that word 'brother'; and in the declaration of the brotherhood of man, apart altogether from the considerations of social distinctions, emancipation is more than anticipated and the death-knell of slavery rung. 'Where the owner is christianized, the bondman is enfranchised.'

Onesimus had doubtless done Philemon considerable wrong. He had transgressed against many kindnesses, and was worthless and unprofitable. Either, as Theodoret surmises, he had robbed Philemon of money entrusted to his charge, or the longing which had welled up in his heart to taste the freedom of the greater world had been too strong for him, and he had found his way to Rome. It was the most convenient place for hiding, and withal

[1] Col. iv. 9. [2] Philem. 15, 16.

the most congenial to his wild and wayward wish. How long he was in the grip of the great city, with whom he associated, what manner of life he lived, how he heard of Paul and met with him, are matters about which the apostle has exercised a kindly silence. His companionship would probably be with runaway slaves like himself, and his soul could not resist taking some of the adverse impressions of their influence. He was just the kind of man of whom the moralists of Rome would despair, and he was just the kind for whom Paul laboured. Onesimus had made a discovery concerning himself before he left Philemon's home. He came to know that he was something more than a Phrygian slave. He was *a man*! Now, as he stood in Paul's presence, a greater discovery opened up to him, and he knew himself to be, both in the heights and depths of his manhood, *a soul*! And as Paul told of Him who laid aside His exceeding glory to be the bearer of the world's burden, bending himself to the Cross that He might become a Saviour to the uttermost, and by His grace make all who confide in Him free from the greater bondage, the heart of Onesimus responded to the wondrous truth, and the good-for-nothing slave became a disciple, and by his devotion in service and fidelity to the gospel was acknowledged as *a faithful and beloved brother*. Then for the first time he knew the joys of true liberty, the freedom wherewith Christ makes men free. Then for him there was but one duty, and that fearlessly to face the past before he could reach out to the future. He must return to Colossae, Christ's freed-man but still Philemon's slave. So, in company with Tychicus, bearing Paul's

letter—the tacit acknowledgement of his servitude—he set out for that home he had deserted in shame. That return was one of the wonders the grace of God alone can work!

And what of Philemon? St. James tells us that 'the wisdom which is from above'—the principle by which Christian men determine their conduct—'is easy to be intreated, full of mercy.'[1] It was to that quality in Philemon's nature that Paul appealed. He knew that since Philemon possessed the grace of clemency he could freely intercede with him in the interests of another, and in that case the future of Onesimus would be assured. Paul's knowledge of Philemon's merciful heart gave him confidence, and the exquisite letter—ardent in desire to gain a cherished end, throbbing with the hope one friend can with assurance expect to be fulfilled by another, and radiant with the joy of restoring one who aforetime had been unfaithful that henceforth he might show the signs of lasting fidelity—was written. But of the manner of its reception we have no scrap of information. We only know that Philemon preserved it—possibly as one of his cherished possessions. That surely is testimony enough! And as we read its deftly chosen words we are sure that Onesimus was restored for Paul's sake and the gospel's!

Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.[2] How irresistible was the challenge of the tactful plea! Philemon could not, and dare not, dim a confidence such as that. Vengeance might be in his power, but it could not henceforth dwell in his heart. He

[1] Jas. iii. 17. [2] Philem. 21.

must be merciful. And mercy is rich in compensations. 'It blesseth him that gives.' With what wealth of love did Onesimus reward Philemon for that kindness which cost so little beyond the exercise of a graceful forbearance! There are some stoops of the soul which, as Browning says,[1] upraise it. And they upraise others also. Philemon was never a truer follower of Him who prayed 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,'[2] than when he received Onesimus to his heart and welcomed him back to his home. And they who imitate his forbearance in the hour of a possible revenge discover the superlative joy of their Lord's beatitude, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'[3]

[1] *Saul*, § xvii. line 15. [2] Luke xxiii. 34. [3] Matt. v. 7.

GROUP II.

THE OBSCURE

ANANIAS: THE COMMISSIONED

Have you ever heard the story of John Owen's conversion? While a student at Oxford he was awakened to spiritual concern, but he could find no peace. By-and-by he was in London, and went with a friend to hear that famous Presbyterian, Dr. Edmund Calamy, in Aldermanbury Chapel. To his disappointment, the preacher was not Dr. Calamy, but an unknown stranger from the country. However, his simplicity and earnestness touched Owen, and when the text was announced: 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' he prayed for a message to his soul. And his prayer was granted. He left the chapel rejoicing in the peace of Christ. And the odd circumstance is that he was never able to discover who the preacher was. The man had been called in to fill Dr. Calamy's pulpit in a sudden emergency; and none knew or cared whence he had come or whither he had gone. One whom the Church counted 'a failure,' he would return to his obscure place with his burden of discouragement; and he never learned what that sermon of his had achieved. He had brought John Owen to Christ, and on the great Day, when every man shall have his own, will he not, to his boundless surprise, share the reward and the glory of John Owen's splendid ministry?

David Smith.

XII

Ananias : the Commissioned

To Ananias of Damascus, who lives in sacred history because of the events of one outstanding day wherein he played an important part, there was given a commission unparalleled in the annals of Christianity. He was the chosen of God to bring to the stricken soul of Saul, the persecutor, that comfort and that knowledge of the grace of God which were to transfigure his life and change the whole current of his sympathies and labours. For that brief day he was both the prophet and priest of God to Saul's broken heart ; and though with the setting of the sun his work was done, there are very few who do not envy him the high honour so signally thrust upon him by the providence of God.

It affords an excellent way of approach to the service of this much-neglected man to take up the biographies of those who have gained fame in the cause of Christ and discover therein the simple instrumentalities by which they were influenced for righteousness. Take Augustine's tribute to Simplicianus, whom he consulted shortly before his conversion : ' Thou didst put into my mind, and it seemed good in my eyes, to go to Simplicianus, who seemed to me a good servant of Thine ; and Thy grace shone in him. I had heard also that from his very youth he had lived most devoted to Thee. Now he was grown in years ; and by reason of so great age spent in such zealous following of Thy ways, he

seemed to me likely to have learned much experience; and so he had. Out of which store I wished that he would tell me (setting before him my anxieties) which were the fittest way for one in my case to walk in Thy ways.' That interview was but one link in a chain of extraordinary events which sealed his faith in Jesus Christ. Call to mind the incident of the destitute soldier to whom Francis of Assisi gave his cloak and the effect upon his after-life; or of the Augustinian monk who uttered to Savonarola a searching word he would never repeat to human ear; or the story of Nicolas von Basel and how he revealed to John Tauler the felicities of the inner light; or those godly women of Bedford whom Bunyan overheard talking as though they were dwellers in a new world. Take the epochal event when the aged monk went to the despairing Luther in the monastery at Erfurt with the words, 'You must believe not only in the forgiveness of David's sin and Peter's sin; it is God's command that we believe our own sins are forgiven us.' Think of the happening of that memorable day when Peter Böhler, the Moravian minister, reasoned Wesley out of his objections against the doctrine of justification by faith; or of the words uttered by a lady to George Whitefield when he told her that he thought he heard the voice of God from Sinai and durst not meet him: 'George, this is a call from God.' In every one of these so seemingly insignificant things there is something akin to the ministry of Ananias.

Thus we come to Ananias; and the first thing we discover in him is A CAUTIOUSNESS WHICH AVERTS DISASTER. The commission had been granted to him on this wise. News had been brought to the

little community of Christians at Damascus that Saul, *breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*, and authorized by credentials from the high-priest, was on his way thither that *if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might carry them bound unto Jerusalem.*[1] Saul's reputation had become a by-word, and consternation filled the heart of all against whom his mission of extermination had been projected. No word appears to have reached them of the divine intervention, and even if it had it would probably have been regarded as a plot on the part of Saul to take them the more easily. But apparently they had heard nothing ; for while evil tidings have swift wings, good news travels slowly. They only know that Saul is on his reckless, ruthless way. Then to one of their number came the staggering call, *Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus ; for behold he prayeth ; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.*[2]

Regarded from the purely human standpoint, that was a most exacting demand ; and Ananias is awed at the vastness of the divine purpose. In this particular he but follows the example of those lion-hearted men of Israel's history who for the moment wavered before they boldly adventured themselves in response to God's claim. In his hesitation—even in his expostulation with God—there was something intensely human ; and precedent may be found for him in the diffidence of such men as Moses and

[1] Acts ix. 1, 2. [2] Acts ix. 11, 12.

Joshua, Isaiah and Jeremiah, despite the difference of the conditions of their call. This chosen messenger was a convert from Judaism to Christianity, and he had carried over to the new Faith many of the sterling qualities which he had acquired under the old. He was a man of firm resoluteness and wise discrimination, and it was his sense of caution that made him pause. He was not cravenly afraid, but he would not put himself recklessly in danger's way. *Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon Thy name.*[1] There is a proper place for caution in the service of Christ. A rash decision, a venturing upon an unconsidered plan, a hasty response to a momentary impulse, have proved the ruin of untold possibility, and have cost the Churches much resultless expenditure of wealth and loss of valued service. Lack of discernment concerning the ultimate issues of things has more than once placed a Christian toiler in a position of unnecessary danger. God holds no man guilty of offence for the proper use of caution; the balance is surely on the other side, and the Christ who taught the parables of caution[2] cannot be disloyal to His own teaching.

But caution has its limits. It can become a peril instead of a safeguard. It can be made an excuse for indifference in times of moral crisis, and for an unworthy withdrawal from all that makes demands upon us which run counter to our desire. When it becomes our master instead of our guide, it is 'like the Dutch deputies who would never allow Marl-

[1] Acts ix. 13. [2] Luke xiv. 28–32.

borough to venture anything, and by their excessive caution prevented many a victory being won.' So it might have been with Ananias had he not had a confidence in God's wisdom which made him hazard himself at the divine bidding. God speaks to him a second time, and with promptitude he obeys. *The Lord said unto him, Go thy way . . . and Ananias departed.*[1]

It is in the spirit in which he fulfilled this commission that we discover another quality of his—A MAGNANIMITY WHICH OVERLOOKS OFFENCE. He was sent to a persecutor; to one whose name had been fear-inspiring, but who now was shorn of strength and humbled by the strong hand of the Omnipotent. What an opportunity for a man of meaner build than Ananias! How justly he might have upbraided him for those days of fierce slaughter, and for the wrong done to the saints! With what searching words he might have scourged Saul's already stricken soul! What a chance for the bitter-hearted! But Saul needed none of this. In those three days of solitude his soul had been pierced with sorrow barbed with remorse. What merciless, crushing, awful days they were! Shut in with himself, his memory alert and his conscience smarting, what did he not endure! How he recalled the familiar faces,

> Dear men and women whom I sought and slew,

and how he vowed,

> Ah! when we mingle in the heavenly places,
> How will I weep to Stephen and to you!

[1] Acts ix. 15, 17.

To such a nature as his to be thus left alone was dreadest agony, and at last his pent-up feelings find expression in passionate pleading. *Behold, he prayeth.* God had commissioned His envoy, and had prepared the heart of Saul to receive him.

And Ananias entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.[1] In that declaration there is revealed the boundless mercy of the Lord. And in one word of it there is manifested the magnanimity of the heart of Ananias. BROTHER Saul! We find no such word in the commission. The gracious heart of Ananias volunteered it. He had discovered in God's claim upon the misguided zealot that which could transform the persecutor into a brother, and as a brother he was prepared to receive him.[2] Forgiven of God, and welcomed by man, Saul rose from his knees. The blindness vanished from his eyes, and a new warmth kindled in his heart. He was Saul no longer. He was a new creation. By Ananias he was baptized into the name of the Nazarene. Thenceforth all his energies were swept into another channel, so that men came to say of him, 'He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havock.'[3] By the nature of things he was to increase, while Ananias was to vanish. The envoy's work was complete, and with its accomplishment he disappears from the pages of sacred history. But for one grand day he has lived before us for our edification and example, the peerless type of those whom God

[1] Acts ix. 17. [2] See Stalker, *St. Paul*, pp. 41, 42. [3] Gal. i. 23.

commissions. 'Potent with the spell of heaven,' he gained his erring brother; and, faithful to his Lord's command, it was his to discover how God turns the unpleasant task into a means of benediction for the world.

TYCHICUS: THE MESSENGER

The visit of a preacher was an event for all the Methodists of town or village. As a traveller, he brought news of other towns and places in the country, then also remote and strange. His conversation brought his listeners into living contact with the larger life of the Circuit and Connexion. As he told of his escapes, of moving accidents by flood and field and coach and horse, he was regarded with something akin to awe; and as he dilated with gladness, which the experience of his listeners enabled them to share, upon the miracles of grace wrought by God through Wesley and the preachers, farmer's kitchen and miner's cot, or shopkeeper's parlour, became a Bethel, the entranced company a church in the house, and Jesus appeared in the midst. . . . The movements of the preacher made a track of light in the moral gloom of the country, and the blessing of him that was ready to perish was at once his justification and reward.

GEORGE EAYRS.

XIII

Tychicus: the Messenger

Were it not for one warm-hearted appreciation of his real worth embodied in the Colossian Epistle, and repeated substantially in that to the Ephesians, we should know practically nothing of Tychicus. It is by far the fullest mention we have of him, and it is the only one in which anything of his individuality comes to the surface. *All my affairs shall Tychicus make known to you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our estate, and that he may comfort your hearts.*[1] In the other three passages which mention his name he is spoken of as a messenger, and in each it is significant that he is said to have been *sent*. Were it not for the threefold tribute in the letter to the church of which he had been a member, the saying might be justified that he was one whose whole service in the Kingdom of God could be expressed by the somewhat colourless phrase, He being sent, went! *There* ACCOMPANIED *him . . . of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.*[2] *When I shall* SEND *Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me.*[3] *Tychicus I* SENT *to Ephesus.*[4]

And this is all that is said of a ministry that covered a period of ten strenuous years—*Tychicus have I sent*! Yet that it could be said of all those years, with no implication of demur or refusal, is not that

[1] Col. iv. 7, 8. [2] Acts xx. 4. [3] Titus iii. 12. [4] 2 Tim. iv. 12.

the surest evidence that he possessed such qualities as make a simple nature superior? Tychicus had discovered himself as truly as ever Paul had discovered him. He could not avoid recognizing the distance between himself and the more distinguished members of the Pauline group. He knew how ordinary were his gifts; but he had the wisdom so to apply them that they might contribute to the best and highest ends. And is not that of all service the most praiseworthy by virtue not so much of the quality of the deed as by the capital with which it has been accomplished? We yield our admiration so freely to that genius which has cost its possessor but little, and which attains without the expenditure of effort or the shedding of blood, that we have made it a standard by which our judgements are fashioned, with the result that we are rarely just or even generous to the man who plods his way to an unadorned success. Yet it is this latter who is most frequently faced with discouragement and who when he succeeds merits recognition. The commonplace are ever liable to be under-estimated, and their service regarded as of trivial worth. The artist, the poet, the architect—the men whose work has a greater relation to the future than to to-day—although there may be commonplace souls among them, leave the ploughman and the weaver—the men who work necessarily for the fleeting present—far behind in the race for fame; yet it is the ordinary toilers whose work most obviously benefits the greater number, and who by their ordinary qualities maintain society and establish the progress of mankind.

And Tychicus knew that he possessed this quality of ORDINARINESS. He knew that were he

placed in a position which demanded the genius of Luke, or the diplomacy of Titus, or the persuasiveness of Apollos, he must fail. But perseverance was his, and fidelity was his also ; and his was the strong limb, the brave heart, and the tireless zeal. He was free from self-centred aims, and ready to advance the Kingdom of God and to strengthen the faith of his fellows by undertaking the humdrum and perilous task without thought of any reward other than that of doing good. Surely the proof of a soul divinely fair !

> Thou wander'st the wide world about,
> Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
> With friends to greet thee, or without,
> Yet pleased and willing ;
> Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
> And all things suffering from all,
> Thy function apostolical
> In peace fulfilling.

The simple verse, as Wordsworth tells us, was intended to describe an ' unassuming commonplace of nature ' ; and he defended himself against the criticism that to use the phrase ' thy function apostolical ' of an insignificant flower was little less than profane by saying that ' it might be regarded, in its humble degree, as administering both to moral and to spiritual purposes.' And had he not high authority for such a position ? Did not our Lord Himself point to the common lily of the Judaean hillside when He wished to teach men the secret of freedom from care ? Did not the lily possess a function apostolical ? But while not robbing the simple flowers of the discerning tribute

of their whole-hearted lover, may not Wordsworth's lines be applied to Tychicus? Did he not fulfil a function apostolical by the discharge of menial duties? Did he not by the consecration of his undistinguished powers make himself indispensable to Paul? From the day that he was chosen by his brethren to accompany the apostle with the contribution for the poor saints of Jerusalem he had discovered his life's work; and though it was of the lowliest order, he was faithful to it. There are some services which, because anybody can do them, and because they add no lustre to, and win no applause for, the doers, are liable to be left undone; and it is a fortunate thing for the Churches when men of meagre endowments will undertake these drab duties and perform them with ungrudging zeal and unflinching earnestness. Of such Tychicus is a splendid type, and he has provided us with a perfect example of the way in which obscure toil may be transfigured by a spirit of sublime devotion. Hence the guess that he was one of the brethren referred to in 2 Cor. viii. 18–24, whatever its worth when critically considered, is easy to understand. For Tychicus as a messenger of the Churches reflected the glory of Christ.

The noteworthy thing about Tychicus was that by the spirit with which he discharged a common obligation He Made the Ordinary Extraordinary. Five years after his memorable journey to Jerusalem Paul, now a prisoner at Rome, had occasion to write three letters destined for Asia Minor; one—that to the Ephesians—a circular letter intended to go the round of the Asian churches and to be read to each in turn; another to the church

at Colossae alone, meeting the special circumstances of that distracted society; and still a third to Philemon concerning Onesimus. For the safe delivery of these letters Tychicus was chosen. He was to go on a wearisome journey to a region he knew so well, hand over to the leaders of the churches the communications he carried, and confirm the faith of the brethren and gladden their hearts by the news he brought of Paul and the progress of the gospel. Hence part of the service of Tychicus was, if judged by ordinary standards, obviously a piece of secular work. The letters he carried could not have had for him the same meaning they have for us to-day. True, they were the writings of his master, dealing with high and sacred things; but he could not think of them as of more than passing interest. Spiritual they were, but yet local and temporal; and they probably had much the same worth to him that one of Wesley's letters might have had to any of his preachers. Yet, was the work merely secular? Did he not transfuse it with the sacred by the manner in which he fulfilled it? As he passed about from city to city reading at the meeting-places of the saints the precious words he was commissioned to convey, and reciting the things which Paul, having such a messenger, did not think necessary to commit to writing—of the state of the apostle himself; of the way in which through the very hindrances which beset him the progress of the gospel in Rome was being effected; and of the unexpected doors which were being opened for the word of life—was there not something of the spiritual in the lowly toil? It is not so much the nature of a deed as the quality of the motive which inspires it

that determines whether it be secular or otherwise. Only that is secular which comes from a secularized heart. A man may go about the holiest tasks with such a spirit as to make them utterly secular—as Balaam blessing Israel against his will, or Richelieu garbing his intrigues with the cloak of religion; while another may do the commonest things in such a way that our Lord interprets them as done unto Himself. 'One can spin, another can make shoes,' said Tauler to his humble congregation at Strasburg, 'and all these are the gifts of the Holy Ghost. I tell you, if I were not a priest, I would esteem it a great gift that I was able to make shoes, and would try to make them so well as to be a pattern to all.' The hardened heart and not the hardened hand is the sign of secularity.

And what was the motive which so mightily influenced the heart of Tychicus and made him undertake and discharge the obscure service in such a royal manner? Whence comes the glow of the spiritual in it all? Were it said that it was done for Paul's sake, but little fault could be found with the judgement; for doubtless, upon the surface of things, so it was. When Paul's influence fastened itself upon any man, it usually gripped the whole man. And the apostle had so gained the heart of Tychicus that his wish had but to be uttered and it became nothing less than an urgent command. He was a 'faithful minister' in whom the utmost reliance could be placed. And until the end of Paul's days Tychicus was ever ready for the work that he could do. Thus was he won to a service which had lost its drudgery because inspired by the devotion of one heroic soul unto another. But

there was a deeper motive. Another beside Paul had gained the heart of Tychicus, and what he did was done for his Lord. He was, to quote the simple tribute once again, a ' beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant *in the Lord*.' His union with Christ became the dominating principle of his life. Christ was his Lord, his King. Therefore, recognizing the will of Paul to be for him the call of Christ, he threw himself with all the ardour of his nature into the otherwise irksome task, counting it the highest honour to do the lowlier things ' for Jesus' sake.' Thus his ordinary ministry caught the glory of the Lord and became extraordinary. And it is this motive which, to use the familiar words of the quaint singer of Bemerton, ever transfigures duty :

All may of Thee partake :
  Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture (*for Thy sake*)
  Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
  Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
  Makes that and th' action fine.

EPAPHRAS: THE SOLICITOUS

Oh for such men of great asking!
Instant and sore though our need,
Victorious our flag if there on the crag
Aaron and Hur intercede.

These are the covenant-warriors
Bearing the Ark of the Shrine,
And walls, turret-crowned, they compass around
Sure of the promise divine.

Satan, the Ruler of Darkness,
Watches such faith with alarm,
For saints when they kneel in fervent appeal
Grasp the Invincible Arm.

Aye, and for thorn and for briar
Myrtle and fir-tree shall rise,
And where there was night God's marvellous light
Shall gladden the tear-stainèd eyes.

Captain of Hosts! we Thy soldiers
Tread where Thy Greathearts have trod:
Such zeal be our share! make us mighty in prayer!
Fill with the fullness of God!

W. L. Chamings.

XIV

Epaphras: the Solicitous

There can be few joys greater than that of the evangelist who, to conserve the fruits of his labours, becomes a pastor, and upon whom the duty rests of nurturing the religious life of those whom he has won for the Kingdom. This joy had come to Epaphras, who had been chosen for the spiritual oversight of the church at Colossae. He was a native of that city—*one of yourselves*,[1] said St. Paul, who knew the value of such an appeal—and it was largely through his efforts that the church had been founded there. Returning from Ephesus, where he had heard Paul preach, he began to proclaim to his own people the riches of the grace of God; and the apostle, reviewing the unassuming and successful toil, accepts the unofficial deputy as *our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf*.[2]

Thus Epaphras became one of them of Colossae in a higher sense that that of being a fellow townsman. He was one of themselves inasmuch as he took to his own heart the things which concerned them, whether of their growth in grace or of their departure from the simple faith of the gospel. He was essentially a pastor, and among the Pauline men there was none who outshone him in this particular. It was his only gift, but in him it was perfected; and from Paul's testimony it would seem

[1] Col. iv. 12. [2] Col. i. 7.

that all his ministry was modelled upon the apostolic principle of 'admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ.'[1] And in that ministry there are features which challenge consideration and evoke a spirit of emulation.

Foremost among these is His Wistful Solicitude for His People. The tributes which Paul pays this obscure worker are so glowing as to appear to be a designed and generous shielding of one whose action was in danger of being misunderstood. For his sake, it has been assumed, the apostle indulged in a piece of pardonable hyperbole. But there is no evidence to confirm this, and it is better to believe that he was all, and did all, that stands to the credit of his name. Paul believed that it was good for this church that he should unveil the heart of its minister and reveal what manner of man he was. It was necessary that he should do this to explain the motives which had led Epaphras to consult him concerning a problem with which he could not cope. It would allay suspicion and exclude bitterness. It was necessary for their sake also that they might know the grief which their pending defection was causing the man who loved them as his own life. And so he writes, *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness, that he hath much labour for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis.*[2] And all this, we may be bold to say, was behind the scenes, so that only one with

[1] Col. i. 28. [2] Col. iv. 12, 13.

the clear discernment of Paul could detect the sore heart of the pastor who saw his life's work in deadly peril. Paul knew because his own soul had been torn with a kindred fear, and because he had felt the pressing anxiety of vacillating churches. 'Beside those things which are without,' he had written to another wavering church, 'there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.' Because he had felt and known this he determined that the Colossians should be made to know how sharp was the pain of it. To hold them to the truths they were in danger of discarding he would clinch the refutation of the plausible heresy by the human appeal which lay in the agonizing solicitude of Epaphras, who was one of themselves.

Behind the quest of Epaphras there was a history the particulars of which are known to every student of the Pauline Epistles. The halcyon days when he moved among his own people and trained them in the things of the Lord had passed, and the happiness of them had been overshadowed in an unexpected manner. A great, disturbing problem had come into his life, and had filled him with alarm. He knew how the influence of the new teaching was gaining ground, and how, while claiming to be Christian, it was robbing the Master of His essential glory. And he knew how unable he was to resist it. Therefore in his bewilderment he journeyed to Rome, and by stating his case to Paul sought guidance from the ablest mind he knew. And the manner in which he told the facts which occasioned his disquietude, revealing everything without reserve, and placing by the side of his church's instability its undoubted excellences, captured the heart of Paul. Nothing

passed his lips without knowledge, without necessity, and without love. Epaphras knew the weakness of his people, but he would not suffer himself to belittle or despise them. Solicitude and labour and intercession such as his could never come from a soul that scorns. The tedious journey had been taken solely for their good, and the exact conditions had been stated with the utmost fairness, with no other purpose than that he should be the better equipped for the emergencies of the hour and that he might 'present every man perfect in Christ.'

The next thing the apostle fastens upon in the ministry of Epaphras was THE STRENUOUSNESS OF HIS TOIL. *I bear him witness, that he hath much labour for you.*[1] Paul's own words suffer somewhat by their English rendering. The Revisers, however, were satisfied with their translation, and give us no marginal alternative. But, considering the original, 'much labour' is a colourless phrase which does not represent the particular quality of the toil Epaphras had bestowed upon his church. 'Much stress of service'[2] more freely expresses the idea Paul wished to convey—an idea which perplexed the scribes who copied the manuscripts of the New Testament, and led them to tone it down by substituting 'much *zeal*,' 'much *trouble*,' 'much *striving*.' It was a labour which involved anguish and exacted the whole of his time and strength. Epaphras was utterly devoted to his task of ministering, and spent himself in it. And has not this a modern application? A minister stands in a unique position within the ranks of the world's toilers. No external authority determines the extent of his labours, and,

[1] Col. iv. 13. [2] See Trench, *Synonyms*, § cii.

provided he satisfies the ordinary claims of his church, he may content himself with a mere minimum of exertion. He presents no time-table at the end of the week, and the compass of his toil, and the intensity of it, are largely determined by himself. That is his peculiar honour and peril. It is only as he listens to the voice of conscience, remembering the while that he is the servant of that Master to whom all is due, and that when he has done all even then he is an unprofitable servant, that he can meet and overcome his temptation to an easy-going discharge of obvious obligation. Epaphras would be put to shame by no member of his church engaged in mercantile affairs. And when Paul heard from his unwilling lips the details of each day's employment, he could only express the total of it by that word which so bewildered the transcribers — 'much labour.' 'Whatever work a Christian man does,' writes Dale in his *Nine Lectures on Preaching*, 'is work that has to be done for Christ; and if we are negligent in the doing of it, we ought to confess our sin with sorrow and shame, and to ask Christ's forgiveness.' Epaphras had rarely to confess that sin. And Paul determined that the Colossians should know that the work of the ministry when faithfully discharged is no easy matter, but a hard, exacting, exhausting toil!

The final feature of the ministry of Epaphras was THE ARDOUR OF HIS INTERCESSION: *Always striving for you in his prayers.* Behind this striving there is the daring ideal of his pastoral hope: *That ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.*[1] He would see the wavering

[1] Col. iv. 12.

church secure and steadfast, no longer drawn aside by alluring perversions, but mature in faith and certain in conviction. He would see them triumphing over their peril and robbing it of its spoil. At the back of his pleading there was the radiant hope, 'every man perfect in Christ.'

'*Always* striving for you in his prayers.' Wesley, describing the character of a Methodist, says, 'Not that he is always in the house of prayer; though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon Him in words: for many times "the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered." But at all times the language of his heart is this: "Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto Thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto Thee."' And this is true prayer, and this alone. Such is the interpretation of the 'always.'

'Always *striving for you* in his prayers.' In this his prayers and his labour harmonized, and the intensity of his intercession determined the strenuousness of his toil. Of Thomas Collins, who in his ministry merged the work of the evangelist with that of the pastor, this illuminating testimony has been borne: 'If he prayed for individuals or families, as he often did, he took care to throw around them a network of holy influences, and he very legitimately helped God to answer his prayers.' Such were the prayers of Epaphras, prayers that serve. He 'agonized' in prayer. Intercession has its joyous impulses, it is true, but it has been the lot of the

world's great pleaders to know something of Gethsemane in their prayers. What noble examples Epaphras had! Here is Abraham pleading for Sodom, 'Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure. . . .'[1] Or Moses, 'If Thou wilt forgive their sin . . .; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book.'[2] Or Paul himself, 'I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake. . . . My heart's desire and supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.'[3] And what successors he has had! Here is Catherine of Siena crying, 'O Sovereign Clemency, behold my body. I offer it up unto Thee as an anvil on which are to be bruised the sins of the wicked; I offer Thee my life, now, or whenever Thou pleasest.' Or David Brainerd, 'I was in such an agony, from sun half an hour high till near dark, that I was wet all over with sweat; but oh, my dear Lord did sweat blood for such poor souls.' Or F. W. H. Myers, interpreting for us Paul's supplications,

> How have I knelt with arms of my aspiring
> Lifted all night in irresponsive air,
> Dazed and amazed with overmuch desiring,
> Blank with the utter agony of prayer!

Souls are precious in the sight of the pleader when for their sake he counts not the pain of such intercession too great a price to pay for their perfecting!

[1] Gen. xviii. 30. [2] Exod. xxxii. 31, 32. [3] Rom. ix. 1, x. 1.

EPAPHRODITUS: THE ENTHUSIAST

There is no man excellent in his profession, whatever it be, who has not in his temper a strong tincture of enthusiasm.

WESLEY.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. . . . Every heroic act measures itself by its contempt of some external good.

EMERSON.

In a service which Thy will appoints
  There are no bonds for me;
For my inmost soul is taught the truth
  That makes Thy children free;
And a life of self-renouncing love
  Is a life of liberty.

ANNA LAETITIA WARING.

XV

Epaphroditus: the Enthusiast

The New Testament portrait of Epaphroditus is but a miniature. It was given to a people who knew him well, and to whom every feature would be familiar save those associated with his heroic ministry in Rome when he became the apostle's companion in labour. These St. Paul has epitomized into a few pregnant sentences, and for the rest we are left to the reconstructions of our own imagination. *Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need; . . . for the work of Christ . . . came nigh unto death, hazarding his life.*[1]

For the work of Christ! For that work our Lord formulated a law which none but the heroic obey: 'Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain.' Now, the glory of Epaphroditus was that while he was not coerced into the service of the first mile, he believed in that of the second also. He was a man possessed of a strong sense of duty, and would loyally fulfil any obligation the Church might lay upon him even to the minutest detail. But his service did not stop at the discharge of some literal and obvious responsibility. He believed

> High heaven rejects the lore
> Of nicely calculated less or more;

[1] Phil. ii. 25–30.

and his glowing enthusiasm carried him into paths of peril so that he risked his life in the service of the second mile. His was THE SELF-FORGETTING RECKLESSNESS OF ENTHUSIASTIC DEVOTION.

At the time when Epaphroditus made his splendid risk, St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome; but that, temporarily, was a matter of restraint rather than of punishment. He was 'treated in Rome with the utmost leniency. He was allowed to hire a house or lodging in the city, and live there at his own convenience under the surveillance of a soldier who was responsible for his presence when required. No hindrance was offered to his inviting friends into his house, or to his preaching to all who came in to him; but he was not allowed to go out freely.' Then Paul the prisoner was still Paul the preacher; and, notwithstanding his restraint, when Epaphroditus found him he was engaged in the work of evangelism in the midst of the greatest political city in the world. It is essential that we should grasp the significance of this if we are to come to the heart of this story of Epaphroditus's devotion.

From the reference in the Epistle to the Philippians we gather that Epaphroditus was the messenger of the Philippian Church. But in what manner did he come to receive his commission to Rome? Probably it was on this wise. At the close of the day, as was their custom, the members of the church had assembled for the common meal and the devotional exercises known as the Agape—of which the Methodist lovefeast is a reminiscence, perhaps a survival—and after the commemoration of the death of their Lord they gave their testimony of that grace which had brought them from heathenism to

faith in Christ. It was but a few years ago that they were strangers to that grace, and now they are anxious for the conversion of the pagan world. Quite naturally their thought turned to their apostle and his labours. Was he in need? If so, could they not help him by their gifts? And before they parted they contributed a liberal sum, 'an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God,' and sent it by Epaphroditus with messages of God-speed. And I cannot think of that simple convocation and those gifts and prayers of the Philippians without calling to mind Heber's well-known missionary hymn, which so admirably indicates what their attitude was to the heathen world:

> Can we whose souls are lighted
> With wisdom from on high,
> Can we to men benighted
> The lamp of life deny?

It is a first principle of all missionary activity. The Church which is exclusive rather than transmissive, which enjoys the privileges of the gospel without endeavouring to extend the range of its influence, is void of the missionary spirit, and is proportionately dead to the duty its Lord lays upon it.

When He frees us from the burden of our sin and brings us 'into the liberty of the glory of the children of God,' He also puts upon us His gracious yoke, which, in this particular, is the obligation of evangelism. And His programme of evangelism is not bounded by any particular shores. The gospel for Philippi was also the gospel for Rome, as the gospel for England is also the gospel for the whole world. It was this belief in the world-range of the

Evangel which lay in the background of the Philippian gifts and the commission of Epaphroditus.

Observe, from this point of view, what Paul says of Epaphroditus: *For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death.* The obligation did not exempt the Church, neither did it exempt Epaphroditus. Collectively the Church had realized its responsibility, but upon this remarkable man rested the singularity of it. The Church gave its gifts, but he hazarded his life. Paul says some exceedingly fine things of him, things which indicate a kinship of spirit, *My brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier.* The apostle could say nothing finer of any of his companions in toil than this, that both in the work and the warfare of the gospel they were yoked together and were as brothers. But how did this obscure man come to be interested in the work of Paul—which was the work of Christ? My mind goes back to that lovefeast at Philippi, and I see Epaphroditus rise and volunteer to take the messages and the money to Rome. But why? The simple motive of it all was that his heart was there. It was as natural for him to go to Paul as for the released bird to fly toward the woods. Who wonders why Emerson when visiting our shores sought out Carlyle? Who is surprised that lovers of books find the great libraries, or that devotees of art visit the famous galleries? It was not to be marvelled at that Epaphroditus went; it would have been staggering had he refused to go.

But when he reached the apostle, what sights he saw! He was in Rome, and he saw how the heart of Paul the prisoner yearned over the great city. He came to feel the passion which throbbed in such

a word as this : 'How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?'[1] Mr. F. W. H. Myers, in his noble poem *St. Paul*, has given us a true insight into the apostle's feelings as he beheld a heathen city :

> Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
> Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings—
> Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
> Sadly contented in a show of things.
>
> Then with a rush the intolerable craving
> Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call—
> Oh, to save these! to perish for their saving,
> Die for their life, be offered for them all!

Doubtless that was true of Paul! He who could wish himself anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake, his kinsmen according to the flesh, who were Israelites, what would he not feel concerning the conversion of the heathen world? Understand that passion, and the shipwreck, the sickness, the imprisonment, and the scourging become intelligible. In those days the work of Christ involved risks like unto these.

So it came about that when Epaphroditus saw Paul's enthusiasm it kindled his own. He had delivered the messages and the money, and his commission had been fulfilled. He was at liberty to return to Philippi. But no ; that sojourn with the apostle had created in his soul a desire to remain. He came to see men with Paul's eyes, and to love

[1] Rom. x. 14, 15.

them with Paul's heart. He was, therefore, ready to strive to save them by taking his stand by Paul's side. Paul was not allowed to leave his home; but how many were the vagrant souls from the way of life that Epaphroditus brought to that hired house? So great was his earnestness, so keenly did the fires of his enthusiasm burn, so did he labour by day and pray by night that the ardour of his soul wore down the strength of his body, and he became *sick nigh unto death.* He hazarded his life, risking his health with the reckless prodigality with which a gambler risks his gold, that he might win men for his Lord.

With this breakdown of his health a keen sorrow entered into his life, and in that sorrow we catch another glimpse of the fineness of his nature. In him there was THAT SOLICITUDE FOR OTHERS WHICH HIDES A PAIN TO AVERT A SORROW. News had reached Philippi that he was ill and that his life was in danger, and he was dismayed, not on his own account, but because of the alarm likely to be created among his friends. *He was sore troubled because ye had heard* There are some natures which, in their hunger for sympathy, obtrude their griefs upon their friends and carry the cloud of their troubles into other lives. It is done without thinking, and has become a matter of habit. In other cases it is the result of a temperament which brooks no restraint. But there are some who, while they suffer keenly, suffer chivalrously. They cast no shadow, and no murmur escapes their lips. They choose to endure alone, and to them there is no pain so great as that of bringing other lives into the zone of their own sorrows. We are so differently

constituted that it would not be seemly to condemn the one while we lavish praise upon the other. ' The heart knoweth its own bitterness ' ; but some see to it that no other than their own heart does know it. That is certainly strength of character, whether it be greatness or not. And of such a type was this companion of St. Paul, whose great grief was not that he was sick, but that his friends had heard of it and were sorrowing on his account.

In this twofold sense of working strenuously and suffering silently Epaphroditus devoted himself for the good of others. In the fourth century there was an order of Church workers who gave themselves to the nursing of the sick, and so hazardous was their calling in the fever-stricken parts of the insanitary cities that they gained their official designation, *Parabolani*,[1] from this very word which Paul employs to describe the enthusiasm of Epaphroditus. And if we want a modern example of this noble passion let the tablet to the memory of David Hill[2] bear its witness : ' Being moved by the Holy Ghost, he gave his life, with his many talents, large opportunities, and all his substance, for thirty-two years to the evangelization of Central China with a generosity that knew no stint, with an earnestness that never grew weary, a self-forgetfulness, humility, and courage, wedded to toil, which increasingly revealed the deep, broad sympathies of his soul and the saintliness of his character. . . . He was zealous for his God.' Epaphroditus has some noble followers in the men and women of to-day who for the sake of Christ and for the love of souls are prepared to

[1] See Kurtz, *Church History*, Vol. I., p. 259.
[2] In Centenary Chapel, York.

lay down their lives. Theirs is a tremendous risk, but it has its inspiration in the Cross of the Redeemer. On Calvary, for us men and for our salvation, He staked everything ; and to the plea of His sacrificial giving there can be but one appropriate response.

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain ;
His blood-red banner streams afar :
Who follows in His train ?

ONESIPHORUS: THE HOSPITABLE

Take the trouble of the brotherhood to your heart, and in the day of your trouble you shall reap, in the love of other hearts, the harvest of your heart's unselfish sowing, and you shall find that the Eternal Love you trusted and obeyed shall not fail you.

PERCY C. AINSWORTH.

I have a room whereinto no one enters
Save I myself alone:
There sits a blessed memory on a throne,
There my life centres.

While winter comes and goes—oh tedious comer!—
And while its nip-wind blows;
While bloom the bloodless lily and warm rose
Of lavish summer.

If any should force entrance he might see there
One buried yet not dead,
Before whose face I no more bow my head
Or bend my knee there;

But often in my worn life's autumn weather
I watch there with clear eyes,
And think how it will be in Paradise
When we're together.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

XVI

Onesiphorus: the Hospitable

It cannot be claimed for Onesiphorus that he was one of the outstanding men of that brilliant group which gathered around St. Paul. There is little in the fragment of a record we have of him that would justify the inference that he was a man of exceptional parts, but in one matter—that of Beneficent Hospitality—he excelled. There are times when the generous deed outshines the brilliant mind, and it is then that the homely virtues receive their true coronation. It was when others failed the apostle and forsook him that the peculiar quality of Onesiphorus's loyalty and magnanimity manifested itself, and in the hour of distress and desertion this man of the minor excellences was magnificent. And the chivalrous mind of Paul the aged did not forget this quiet and timely service. There is something more than mere literary art in his outspoken contrast between the disloyalty of Phygelus and Hermogenes and the constancy of Onesiphorus. It is possible that he expected much of these very men who in the day of his need disappointed him so signally. But, notwithstanding that, the cloud when it came was fringed with light. Hence it is not difficult to imagine the conflicting emotions which inspired the contrast of 2 Tim. i. 15–18: *All that are in Asia turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy*

unto the house of Onesiphorus : for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain ; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me (the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day)[1] *; and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*

It has been assumed by some, on the strength of this final clause, and particularly from the use of the word ' ministered,' that he was a deacon of the church at Ephesus. This is possible, although the inference is scarcely warrantable from a word bearing so general a meaning. He may have been an enthusiastic and devoted official of the church, held in veneration for the manifoldness of his service ; but that is not the particular feature the apostle wishes to bring into fuller view. He is thinking not so much of Onesiphorus in the church as in private life. He does not ignore the many things which he had done in the church, and upon all these due weight is laid ; but it is the unfailing courtesy, the unstinted liberality, the unswerving loyalty of Onesiphorus to himself that now fill his thought. As the remembrance of his friend comes back to him, two things stand out clearly—a home in Ephesus and a prison in Rome. And as he muses wistfully and lovingly over these tender memories his soul is so moved to gratitude that he says, ' The Lord reward him for what he did ; I never can ! '

In a familiar passage Paul has linked the highest phases of Christian experience with a care for poor saints and the entertaining of strangers : ' Continuing instant in prayer ; distributing to the necessity

[1] See Horton, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 148, for note on prayers for the dead. Cf. Moulton's *Religions and Religion*, pp. 162–4.

of saints ; given to hospitality.'[1] In his esteem each of these was a sign of devotion to God. And it was easy to write such words with the example of Onesiphorus and other like-minded men before him. A recent writer has called attention to the many journeys Wesley made and the many tolls he paid as he rode about Great Britain on his apostolic mission. But, because it was outside his scope, he has said nothing of the many homes where Wesley found an open door and friendly cheer. That silence is no fault of Wesley's, for his *Journal* abounds with references to those who honoured themselves by admitting him beneath their roof. Wesley's labours without the hospitality of his people would have been much more limited and much less effectual. In like manner, to how many homes did Paul owe an unpayable debt ! ' The Christians,' Dr. Sanday has reminded us, ' looked upon themselves as a body of men scattered throughout the world, living as aliens among strange people, and therefore bound together as members of a body, as the brethren of one family. The practical realization of this idea would demand that whenever a Christian went from one place to another he should find a home among the Christians in each town he visited. One necessary part of such intercommunion would be the constant carrying out of the duties of hospitality. It was the unity and strength which this intercourse gave that formed one of the great forces which supported Christianity.'

It was in this particular that Onesiphorus shone. In the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, a second-century treatise of but little authoritative value,

[1] Rom. xii. 12, 13.

we discover these illuminating phrases: 'And Paul having gone into the house of Onesiphorus, there was great joy, and bending of knees, and breaking of bread, and the word of God about self-control and the resurrection.' 'Paul was speaking in the midst of the Church in the house of Onesiphorus.' Assuming the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, these passages have a reflexive worth, for it is significant that, two generations removed, the hospitality and godly simplicity of Onesiphorus were still held in esteem by the Christian communities. And it was by these things that St. Paul remembered him.

He oft refreshed me. Unfortunately there is no parallel reference in the New Testament for the word the apostle here employs. But its uses in the Greek version of the Old Testament reveal glimpses of its peculiar suggestiveness. It is employed in Exod. xxiii. 12 of the Sabbath rest, 'On the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.' In 1 Sam. xvi. 23 we are told, 'It came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.' In 2 Sam. xvi. 14 it is said of David himself, after the cursing of Shimei, 'The king came weary; and he refreshed himself there.' Perhaps the most suggestive use is in Ps. xxxix. 13, where it translates a word which means 'to put on a bright face,' and is rendered in the margin of the Revised Version by 'O spare me that I may *brighten up*.' The figure hidden in the apostle's word is that of bringing a

cooling breeze to a fainting man. And that the ministry of Onesiphorus did for Paul. Its effect upon the apostle was akin to the rest of the Sabbath to the work-worn toiler, to the melody which charms away bewildering gloom, or the gleaming of shafts of light through gathering clouds. It came upon Paul's spirit like a vitalizing breath, and gave him new hope for the coming stress. The Church is all too unconscious of the debt it owes Onesiphorus in 'the furtherance of the gospel,' for it was his home that sheltered Paul, his hand that calmed his fever, and his voice that inspired him in his sacred calling. It was a commonplace and yet a sublime service. 'He oft refreshed me.' 'Twice in my life,' writes one of the great religious leaders of a generation ago,[1] 'have I, when worn out with work, gone to a friend's house to recruit.' Who can measure the effect of those times of quiet retirement and inspiration?

When he was in Rome he sought me diligently, and found me. With this simple turn of a sentence Paul passes over a stretch of years, and changes the scene from the ministrations of the quiet home at Ephesus to the loneliness of his sojourn in Rome. Ephesus had not been without its strife and sorrows; but what of Rome! How reminiscent of the contrast between the hospitality of Bethany and the hostility of Jerusalem before the Passion of the Redeemer! What carried Onesiphorus to the imperial city, whether it was the claims of business or his quenchless love of Paul, we have no means of determining. He knew that the apostle was awaiting his final appearance before Nero, and so 'with

[1] J. H. Newman.

extraordinary diligence' he sought him out and refreshed him. That eager searching involved greatest peril, for it implied an acknowledged identification with one who was accused as a teacher of heresies and a traitor to the emperor. But Onesiphorus did not shirk the test. He was neither ashamed of Paul's chain nor afraid for his own safety. It is this unbending constancy that reveals the fine qualities of his heart; he loved to the uttermost and the farthermost, and, careless of danger, he would not forsake. And Paul knew how sustaining was the memory of a love which ceases not to shine when days are dark, which despises not the shame of a brother's chain, and quails not before the severest tests!

'Timotheus, when here and there you go
Through Ephesus upon your pastoral round,
Where every street to me is hallowed ground,
I will be bold and ask you to bestow
Kindness upon one home where long ago
A helpmate lived, whose like is seldom found,
And when the sweet spring flowers begin to blow,
Sometimes for me lay one upon his mound.'

Thus Paul long since from out his Roman cell,
As from the past he saw a face arise—
Fit picture of the veteran who surveys
His yester-years, waiting for evening bell,
While Hesper shines within his quiet skies,
And memory fills with cheer his lonely days![1]

[1] Sir W. Robertson Nicoll.

DIONYSIUS: THE OPEN-MINDED

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went. . . .

Then to the rolling Heaven itself I cried,
Asking, 'What Lamp has Destiny to guide
Her little Children stumbling in the dark?'
And—'A blind Understanding!' Heaven replied.

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God,—

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of Holiness above:
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light,
Through the eternal Love!

DR. BINNEY.

XVII

Dionysius : the Open-minded

St. Luke's account of Paul's attempt to win Athens for his Lord is one of his most impressive and dignified sketches. Yet it is the delineation of one of the most disappointing experiences which chastened the heart of the great apostle. Paul must often have turned eyes of desire to that fair university city, famous alike for its learning, its art, and culture ; where grace and beauty, refinement and chivalry, were fostered as priceless things, and whose history was adorned with a shimmering galaxy of immortal names. It was here that the great philosophies which dominated the thought and life of the educated world had been promulgated, and thither men of all nationalities with a genuine thirst for learning found their way. While Rome ruled the world by its unconquerable might, Athens enthralled it by the simple weapon of a superior mind.

Whatever may have been the attitude of Paul to all this, it is evident that the city must have had for him a peculiar attraction. It was the key city to the intellectual heathen world. How different might have been the story of the progress of Christianity had Athens welcomed Christ ! But it was Paul's great disappointment and failure. A strange emotion surged in his soul as he walked her streets. *His spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols.*[1] In his contempt for idolatry

[1] Acts xvii. 16.

Paul never ceased to be a Jew, and in his Semitic heart there was a revulsion of feeling kindred to that which one trained in the simplicities of an evangelical faith feels upon beholding the elaborate ceremonial of extreme ritualistic worship. And, further, he must have seen that Athens, with its multitude of deities and its altars to the Virtues and Passions, had a deep and real capacity for religion. Beneath its surface glory and grandeur he was conscious of a dissatisfaction which paganism was powerless to meet. Then the passion of the evangelist kindled in his heart, and he yearned to claim the city for the Christ. Could they but know Him for whom all unknowing they were groping with lame hands of faith! Hence in the Jewish Synagogue he opened the Scriptures concerning Jesus, and in the Agora he proclaimed the grace of the risen Lord.[1]

But it was to little purpose, and there is a chilling silence in the narrative concerning his success. To the many he was but a smatterer, 'a picker-up of learning's crumbs'; and they treated him with a listless curiosity which soon shaded off into utter indifference, much as a holiday crowd treats the preacher on the sands. And when, for the sake of greater quietness, he was brought to the meeting-place of their council—although he chose words which were studiously uncompromising and laden with conciliation, basing his plea for the recognition of God upon the need which found expression in their altar *to an Unknown God*[2]—they listened until he spoke of a resurrection, and then dismissed him —some with ridicule; others with, *We will hear thee*

[1] See Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 394–8.
[2] Acts xvii. 23.

concerning this yet again.[1] But he knew how empty of hope the words really were. He had spent upwards of a month among them, but he left them with a sense of failure heavy upon him.

Some expositors have asserted that his philosophical method of dealing with the Athenians was a mistake, and they quote 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2 in support of their view. But that is to read into a purely local reference a general meaning. Simplicity was the necessary thing at Corinth ; but at Athens he believed the more academic method to be the best avenue of approach, and he did not hesitate to employ it. But in spite of this, and not because of it, he could make no impression upon the self-satisfied city. He founded no church there, and though he was in that region later he never revisited her. Athens was Paul's failure. A vain intellectualism and an enervating luxury barred the way to Christ !

Then Paul went out from among them. But certain men clave unto him, and believed ; among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite.[2] That was the redeeming feature of the non-success at Athens. Dionysius was a distinguished convert, and, although the New Testament never mentions him again, he is worthy of his place among the Pauline men. The silence of Luke may be for other reasons than that there was nothing to tell. Dionysius was not needed for his purpose, and so the bare record of his name sufficed. But, as is generally the case, where Scripture is most silent tradition becomes most informing. Ever ready to fasten upon a suitable name, it has claimed Dionysius for its purpose. It

[1] Acts xvii. 32. [2] Acts xvii. 34.

has elevated him to the bishopric of Athens ; it has identified him with St. Denys, the patron saint of France ; and it has attributed to his pen certain books not earlier than the fifth century. Luke, however, is not entirely silent concerning Dionysius, and the two simple facts which he associates with his name do much to disclose him. He was a member of the Areopagus, and he became a Christian. And the conversion of such a man is supremest evidence of the mind that was in him. It bears witness to his sincerity and open-mindedness and courage.

Dionysius was a searcher after truth, and he possessed the primary qualification of all such seekers—that of SINCERITY. Think of this man as he went to and fro in his native city. To which of its many altars would he find his way oftenest? And with what wistfulness of soul would he stand before that witness to the Unknown! Whatever that altar meant to other men, to him it had a message which said as much as any altar to the Unknown can say to any man. It could not supply an answer, but it could awaken inquiry. Dionysius felt in his own heart something to which that altar testified. He knew the unrest which cannot be met apart from God. He knew the problem of his own life—the pressure of those needs which cannot be ignored, and the clamour of those questionings which will not be silenced. He was surrounded by the finest philosophical systems that a refined paganism could produce, and he knew them to be as powerless in dynamic as they were perfect in precept. He knew all that Epicureanism could say concerning the pursuit of pleasure as the chief good, and all that Stoicism could say of the contempt

of pleasure and the conquest of the passions. All that he knew, and all that he had tried. But still the quest of his life was not attained. And this because in Athens there was another altar to the Unknown, and it was in the heart of Dionysius!

A second quality of the truth-seeker is OPEN-MINDEDNESS, and this Dionysius possessed. When Luke summed up the influence of Paul's appeal to the Athenians, he employed a classification of the crowd which adequately describes the attitudes which men are wont to adopt concerning truth: *Some mocked . . . others said, We will hear thee . . . again . . . but certain . . . believed.*[1] All that some have to offer to the claims of truth is a flippant cynicism, and they dismiss it with a sneer. Others suspend their judgement, and this either because they are not prepared to commit themselves or because they are not fully assured in their own mind. They will think about the matter. Hence the postponement of a response may be either a weak evasion or a fair demand for fuller evidence, and it must be judged according to the conditions under which it is made. But we never find the honest seeker among those who mock, and when he is convinced of the truth he will not tarry long with those who withhold. An untrammelled mind responds. And this was true of Dionysius. His conversion was an undisguised confession that he had found in Christianity that which paganism could never supply. The gospel he had learned of Paul awoke a conquering, new-born joy within him. What he had sought in lecture-hall and academy he had stumbled upon wellnigh unawares. But it

[1] Acts xvii. 32.

was strange teaching to him, and before he could accept it prejudice must die. None but the open-minded could entertain truth clad in such unusual garb. But since he was sincere, and free to welcome truth from whatever source it might come, while some derided and others temporized, he clave unto Paul. Of Francis Bacon it has been said, 'His vigorous and sinewy mind was ever ready to wrestle for the blessing of truth.' From such men truth does not withhold her treasures.

The final test to which the reality of a quest for truth must be subjected is that of COURAGE. What sacrifices will a man make, and what ventures will he dare, in its behalf? Dionysius was a member of the Areopagus, and therefore he was a man of some eminence in the social and religious affairs of the city. For him to identify himself with Christianity would make its inevitable demand. It would mean that henceforth he would have to live his life under the searching light of a none too generous community. It would mean separation and singularity. It might even mean that for his faith he would have to endure the test from which so many shrink with dread, the neglect of former friends and the cynicisms of the outer world. Yet, unlike Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, he chose to be an avowed disciple of Jesus. What in our modern life, amid all our Christian traditions and profession and influence, the many shrink from doing, Dionysius undertook unflinchingly in the face of a possibly hostile world, counting but not regarding the cost. And thus in this obscure disciple we have those characteristics which ever distinguish the men whose hearts are set on truth!

DEMAS: THE INCONSTANT

Bagenhall. Who knows? The man is proven by the hour.

. . . . . .

Cranmer. And now I come to the great cause that weighs
Upon my conscience more than anything
Or said or done in all my life by me;
For there be writings I have set abroad
Against the truth I knew within my heart,
Written for fear of death to save my life,
If that might be; the papers by my hand
Signed since my degradation—by this hand
Written and signed—I here renounce them all;
And since my hand offended, having written
Against my heart, my hand shall first be burnt,
So I may come to the fire.

TENNYSON.

XVIII

Demas: the Inconstant

In the day of our severest reverses few things possess for us a more enheartening quality, or shed a more gracious and protecting influence over us, than a devoted companionship. How often has it happened that great souls have wrested success from the grip of an apparent failure, daring to face an otherwise forlorn hope with resolution because their courage has been confirmed by the unyielding comradeship of some comparatively unknown friend! And even when success has been out of the question the value of that rare fellowship has not been one whit the less. Indeed, a sympathy which imparts its consoling virtues most in the day of certain failure has often proved the surest source of courage, and nerved by this alone the otherwise vanquished has been clothed with the intrepidity of the triumphant. Let there be a few who know and trust him, a few who believe in the righteousness of his cause and share the sacred hopes and fears of his life, and, though he may be straitened, it will still be true of him that his perplexity does not lead unto despair. And this, but for his regrettable desertion, Demas might have been to Paul!

As it is, we see in him an instance of Disloyalty to a Peerless Friendship. 'Great souls,' John Kenyon once wrote to Browning, 'jump at sympathy.' How true that was of Paul! How he valued it when it was given! How he missed it

when withheld! As he writes his second Letter to Timothy he is about to make his final defence before Nero, and he is sure that its issue will be less favourable than the former had been. There is little hope of acquittal, probably none. For himself he entertains no fear, and if the section 2 Tim. iv. 6–8 stood apart from its context it would speak of an undimmed triumph; but succeeding it there is another passage of wistful dismay at the dispersion of his friends. There is no real contradiction in these variant moods, for while the latter was a temporary agitation such as most great souls know when they tread the wine-press alone—an experience from which our Lord Himself was not exempt[1]—the former was deep-rooted and constant. In whatever state the surface of the ocean may be there is a profound calm in its depth. *Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.*[2] Paul is all the more to us because he penned those lines in which his heart brooks no silencing concerning its craving for companionship. As he speaks out of the solitude we hear the man who lived in the apostle; and it may be that the most searching sentence in all this Epistle is that simple word, *Only Luke is with me*. It is no disparagement of Luke; it merely expresses a keenly felt loneliness, and enforces the appeal, *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me . . . come before winter*, and it shows us how very true it is that great souls do jump at sympathy.

The human heart
Finds nowhere shelter but in human kind!

[1] Matt. xxvii. 46. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 10, 11.

Here, then, was the opportunity of Demas. In more favoured days he had been a fellow labourer with St. Paul, and now that the shadow had fallen upon a great life he might have shared with Luke the distinction of an undying devotion. It is an easy matter, and perhaps a useless, to deal with probabilities in a case like this; but one cannot contemplate the frailty of Demas without thinking of the 'might have been.' There is no reason to doubt that the earlier service he rendered the cause of the evangel was whole-hearted and untainted with selfishness. It is testimony enough that Paul was content to have him in the circle of his friends and helpers. And had he chosen differently, had he been less in love with life, and had he caught more of the spirit of the noble hazard of the few of whom Paul never thought save with a glow of pride, he might have left behind him an imperishable example for those to whom the spread of the gospel is the supreme end of all endeavour. As it is we have the record of a few years of devotion, and then in the time of stress a pitiful desertion. When G. F. Watts was painting his famous picture of 'The Great Refusal,' he said of it, 'Now I am doing a man's back—little else but his back to explain, "He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Fancy a man turning his back on Christ rather than give away his goods! They say his back looks sorry. I don't know. It is what I meant his back to express.' Demas, too, presents to us the study of a back. *Demas deserted me.*

This disloyalty was the outcome of Irresolution in the Hour of Peril. Still, it may be wise and just to hesitate before we express ourselves too

severely upon that act. There have not been wanting those who have considered it apart from its conditions, and have heaped upon him the opprobrium of traitor and recreant. It is so easy to thunder condemnation when we do not investigate causes. His desertion has been exaggerated into apostasy from the Christian Faith, and tradition has dismissed him as companion to the lost. Even Bunyan, whose insight is usually so clear, sees in him one allured by a silver-mine from the honourable path of pilgrim souls, and in his turn leading others astray. By others he is regarded as a lost leader, and they say of him,

> Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
> One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
> One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
> One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!

But are these things true of him? Does the phrase *having loved this present world* justify the conclusion that he was a lucre-cankered soul? Would the condemnation of 2 Pet. ii. 15 rightly meet his case? The answer to all such questions is but a matter for conjecture; but that is the greater reason for charity. A closer scrutiny will probably reclothe his desertion in a kindlier garb. Some men in a moment of testing have acted unwisely, and the stigma of their weakness ever clings to them. The world never forgets the denial of Peter and the hesitation of Thomas. Despite the fires of Oxford, the brand of the craven is still upon Cranmer. Perhaps it may be so with Demas. He had come to that point when he saw the hopelessness of Paul's case with the Roman authorities, and so he preferred

the safety of Thessalonica to the austerities and perils of Rome. In that case Bunyan's silver-mine has to go. The world that Demas loved was probably none other than that of his own security. He was not of the stuff of which heroes and leaders are made ; he was too irresolute and too much in love with life to risk himself, and he 'tried,' as George Eliot says of Tito in *Romola*, 'to slip away from everything that was unpleasant, and cared for nothing else so much as his own safety' ; but for all that he was no traitor. His act is an instance of unworthy withdrawal from a cause in the hour of its unpopularity and possible defeat, and as such it merits sternest reprehension. No excuse can be offered for it. None has been intended. It was just worldly prudence from which every spark of chivalry had been extinguished. It is in the crises of life that character is revealed ; hence in the hour of peril panic seized upon Demas, and he fled.

Demas forsook me. But think how, by reason of its contrast, this forsaking has brought out the splendour of the loyalty of Luke! *Luke is with me.* It is said that the name of a certain Macedonian king is deleted from the royal line because through fear he fled from the field of battle, and was discovered in the attempt to hide his crown under the peasant's cloak he was wearing. On the other hand, it is told of Count d'Auvergne, a soldier distinguished by his skill and valour, that after he was dead his name was retained at the head of his regimental list, and every night when the roll was called the name of the dead officer came first, and a soldier replied, 'Dead on the field of battle.' There is no place of honour for Demas ; he will ever bear the odium of

the fickle, but Luke has gained the distinction of the loyal!

Meanwhile, for Paul, in the face of the desertion of his timid and inconstant friends, there was the comradeship of his unchanging Lord: *Demas forsook me . . . all forsook me . . . but the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.*[1] And thus was fulfilled the inspiring promise, 'I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee'!

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 10, 16, 17.

HYMENAEUS: THE PERVERTER

Dreadful it is to think that Swift knew the tendency of his creed—the fatal rocks towards which his logic desperately drifted. . . . What had this man done, what secret remorse was rankling at his heart, what fever was boiling in him, that he should see all the world bloodshot? We view the world with our own eyes, each of us, and we make from within us the world we see. A weary heart gets no gladness out of sunshine; a selfish man is sceptical of friendship, as a man with no ear doesn't care for music. A frightful self-consciousness it must have been which looked on mankind so darkly through those keen eyes of Swift. . . . He shrunk away from all affections sooner or later. . . . An immense genius; an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling.

THACKERAY, of Dean Swift.

He could never speak of a lost soul without tears in his eyes.

DR. DALE, of D. L. Moody.

XIX

Hymenaeus: the Perverter

The words by which St. Paul outlines the attitude of Hymenaeus toward the Christian Faith are a scathing impeachment unrelieved by a single qualifying phrase and void of a redeeming gleam. He never mentions him except with some admonitory purpose in view. *Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith; of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander.*[1] And again, *Their word will eat as doth a gangrene; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.*[2]

Yet the question may be ventured whether when he first associated himself with the church at Ephesus Hymenaeus was anything but an earnest seeker after truth. Surely charity of thought is not unduly strained when we believe his motives at that time to have been beyond suspicion! There is a saying by Tertullian of Carthage to the effect that some men are as good as Christian by the accident of birth. The balance may have been entirely on the other side with Hymenaeus, and his early life may have lacked those lofty and refining influences which do so much to foster goodness in others. Suppose him to have been born in some Greek city where

[1] 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.

speculation was rife; suppose his ancestors to have been creedless men, curious like the Athenians to hear any new thing; suppose his mind during adolescence to have been peopled with errors which even a subsequent faith in Christ did not entirely counteract—and we have a not altogether fanciful conception of him when he made his first venture in the quest of belief.

By what means he came to hold the Faith we have no means of determining, but it is possible that it was through the efforts of Christian merchants in the towns where they traded. In that case he would be among the band of disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus. Whatever his faith may then have been, we have no authority for questioning its sincerity. How different it might have been with him had some one with the zeal and tact of Aquila and Priscilla taken him to his home and instructed him more perfectly in the way of the Lord!

All this, however, is conjecture. It is with the termination of his Christian career and his subsequent perversion of the faith of others that St. Paul's words deal, and they portray him as A MAN WITH A WARPED MIND. He seems to have been incapable of making a complete break with the past, and, susceptible to the spell of the novel and the speculative, he allowed his undisciplined mind to attempt the impossible fusion of pagan philosophy and Christian doctrine until the former predominated, and he *thrust* from himself belief and a good conscience. It is impossible to say precisely what the nature of his error was, and for practical purposes it is of little moment. It is sufficient to say that its

starting-point was some difficulty concerning the resurrection of the body—possibly some elementary phase of Gnosticism—and for this subordinate matter he surrendered his faith !

This is one of those perplexing vagaries to which an ungirded mind is ever liable. The fault lay not so much in the fact itself as in its wilfulness. Conscience is never silenced or dethroned without a fight. But Hymenaeus thrust it forth. It was not a surrender of that which he could not retain, but a wilful casting away of that which he did not wish to hold. And if a modern rendering of Paul's words may be allowed, we have this striking figure : he threw overboard his conscience, and, like a mariner without a compass, his faith perished in the storm. It was a ruthless thrusting out of the indispensable.

We may be sure that St. Paul did not strive to force the mind of Hymenaeus into a groove it could not fit. He would not excommunicate him from the fellowship of the Church because he could not subscribe to all that he himself held as expressive of the Faith. That would have been to demand mental dishonesty. The Christian religion does not require any one to append his name to a set of unpondered dogmas. There are truths which it regards as fundamental, and concerning these it has the right to expect the utmost fidelity from those who profess the name of Christ ; but when this is recognized a certain latitude must ever be allowed to faith. Since it is *faith*, it cannot be treated in every particular with that inflexibility which belongs properly to a mathematical certainty. The appeal of Christianity traverses another road than that of Islam ;

it disdains to make converts by the logic of force. It knows that a living faith can never be compelled, and so it *pleads* for it by showing reasons. And the faith to which it points is that step into the unknown which knowledge inspires. On that account it has a quality of certitude for which some have even dared to die. Others, however, fronting truth with a perverted mind, have thrust from themselves sustaining beliefs. They destroy the lighthouse, and are wrecked in the gale. So was it with Hymenaeus.

But that is not all. Not only did he forsake the original quest of his soul, but he *overthrew the faith of some*. Thus he became A MAN WITH AN EVIL INFLUENCE. His was the misdemeanour which R. L. Stevenson describes as 'disfiguring beacons on a perilous seaboard.' Subversion in the guise of religion is the most subtle form of peril that has ever confronted truth. Sincerity may easily degenerate into sophistry. In early life Robespierre resigned his position as a provincial judge because it went against his conscience to pronounce sentence of death upon one guilty of a capital offence; yet in after years he became the evil genius of the Revolution, and sent thousands to the guillotine. These descents from high principles and holy purposes are as pathetic as they are unintelligible. And they so often touch other lives! Our youths may resist the scepticism of the street corner because they know it is scepticism, but that of the class-room may take them unawares and wreck their faith. Unbelief has a weird fascination for some minds, and these may be the very men who need the surest foundations. To disturb these by any questionings

of ours may lead to the destruction of the essential things for them. It may not always be wise for a man to lock his difficulties in his own heart. A clear and triumphant faith never comes that way. Happily there are strong souls and reliable books to which we may go for guidance. But to parade our doubts before the impressionable may be in the highest degree mischievous.

> Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,
> Her early Heaven, her happy views;
> Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
> A life that leads melodious days.

Such silence is not of casuistry, it is of grace!

There is nothing in these Epistles to indicate that Hymenaeus separated himself from the Ephesian Church, and it is almost certain that he prosecuted his havoc-working propaganda in its midst. Horace Bushnell, in his searching analysis of *Unconscious Influence*, tells us that 'fear and superstition always infect the mind of the circle in which they are manifested.' And the influence of Hymenaeus was as 'the consuming progress of mortifying disease.' He is never mentioned alone. 'Hymenaeus *and* Alexander'; 'Hymenaeus *and* Philetus.' What a world of tragedy may be hidden in that simple association of names! For as Paul found his Timothy, Cobden his Bright, and Moody his Drummond, so will Hymenaeus discover his Alexander and Philetus. It is inevitable! And each who shares it may go a step beyond, as Toulongeon said of the trio in the crisis of his unhappy nation: 'Whatever these three have in hand,

Duport thinks it, Barnave speaks it, Lameth does it.'

Hence Hymenaeus became the despair of St. Paul, and nothing remained but that the apostle should pronounce upon him the severest form of excommunication: *whom I delivered unto Satan.*[1] But in what spirit did he discharge the unpleasant necessity? It was no light matter for him to remove Hymenaeus from the fellowship of the Church. How eager was his zeal to bring men into that fellowship! And how his heart bled for those who wandered! 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.'[2] How opposed it seems to the severity of the words, 'whom I delivered unto Satan'! Yet with his great Hymn to Love in his thought Paul must do it. And he did not flinch the awful task. In the case of Hymenaeus it had become necessary to sacrifice the decaying limb that the main body of the church at Ephesus might be spared. And so the lips of the evangelist were burdened with words of expulsion, and with a heartache of which he is significantly silent he delivered him over to a disciplinary and remedial punishment: *that he might be taught not to blaspheme.* Yet in the terrible words may we not detect the apostle's unyielding hope for the excommunicated? As Wesley said of Stephen Timmins, the Antinomian subverter of the Society at Wednesbury, 'The whole manner of his behaviour almost induced me to think God had for a season given him up to the hands of Satan.' Mark that 'for a season,' and compare with it the great Pauline principle of excommunication, 'Deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction

[1] 1 Tim. i. 20. [2] Gal. iv. 19.

of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'[1] And note this very carefully—it is from the same Epistle as the Hymn to Love!

[1] 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 'The full meaning does not come out until the passage is read in connexion with the ancient custom of execration, i.e. devoting a person to the gods of the lower world. A person who wished to injure an enemy or to punish an evil-doer consecrated him by incantation and tablet to the powers of darkness below, and the tablet reached its address by being confined to the earth, generally to the grave. . . . The only difference between Jewish and pagan execrations probably lay in the fact that Satan took the place of the gods of the lower world. In form, however, there must have been great similarities. This is seen in . . . 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. Two technical expressions are here adopted from the ritual of cursing. The phrase "deliver unto Satan that . . ." recurring in 1 Tim. i. 20, corresponds to the formula in the London Magical Papyrus 46, 334 ff: "Daemon of the dead . . . I deliver unto thee N.N., in order that. . . ." And even the unobtrusive little word *σύν*, "with," . . . is technical in just such contexts as this: we find it not only in the Paris Magical Papyrus, but also on a much older Attic cursing tablet of lead (3rd cent. B.C.): "I will bind her . . . in fellowship with Hecate, who is below the earth, and the Erinyes." All this proves, therefore, that the apostle advises the Corinthian Church to perform a solemn act of execration' (Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 303–305). Granted the appositeness of the literary parallel, one hesitates to accept the inference. Plainly put it amounts to this: 'You know the pagan and Jewish custom of execration; apply it in this case.' Would Paul, however lofty his motive, be likely to advise a people so recently won from paganism to perform an act so alien to the spirit of the gospel? If we have to choose between 'excommunication' and 'execration,' may we not retain the former with confidence, the literary parallel notwithstanding? See Browning, *The Ring and the Book*, § X. lines 2117–2128.

DEMETRIUS: THE SECULAR

Commerce hath set the mark of selfishness,
The signet of its all-enslaving power,
Upon a shining ore, and called it gold:
Before whose image bow the vulgar great,
The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings,
And with blind feelings reverence the power,
That grinds them to the dust of misery.
But in the temple of their hireling hearts
Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
All earthly things but virtue.

SHELLEY.

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

XX

Demetrius: the Secular

We have reached the point when something should be said concerning the enemies of St. Paul. We have been thinking of the inconstancy of Demas and the mischief-making of Hymenaeus, and these examples of the breaking up of friendship have prepared the way for a study of those whose aversion and undisguised hostility the apostle had drawn unwittingly upon himself. It is not to be wondered at that a man of such distinctive personality, devoted to a mission so revolutionary in many of its bearings, should arouse the antipathies of some, just as he gained the sympathies of others. A strong man appeals to different men in different ways. Take, for example, the extremes of public opinion concerning some statesman of marked individuality. From one section of the community he receives nothing but admiration and hero-worship; from another, nothing but ridicule and opposition. Everything depends upon the point of view and the quality of heart of the men to whom the appeal is made. It is inevitable that the same powers that attract some repel others, especially when what men hold as great issues are at stake. Our Lord Himself knew something of this ordeal. When the multitudes were thronging Him there were an envious and potential few who were voicing a dark and sinister thing—a thing which had the germs of

Calvary in it—'Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the whole world has gone after Him.'[1]

So also was it with St. Paul. Wherever success attended his efforts opposition, sometimes crude and blatant, sometimes subtle and disguised, asserted itself. It came from various sources. His sceptical countrymen, frenzy-led, regarding him as renegade and resenting his Gentile sympathies, pursued him everywhere. They stoned him at Lystra;[2] they arraigned him before Gallio at Corinth;[3] they attacked him at Jerusalem;[4] they bound themselves under a curse to compass his death.[5] There was but one escape from their hate—an appeal to Caesar.[6] And these were the men for whose salvation he could wish himself anathema from Christ.[7] And, further, certain of the Gentile world on whose behalf he had made his splendid consecration put their own interests before those of the common good, and became his avowed antagonists. At Philippi[8] a handful of heartless men, incensed by the loss of personal gain by a deed of mercy which restored a demon-possessed girl to a normal condition, trumped up a political charge against him which led to scourging and imprisonment; and at Ephesus a similar motive inspired a riot. And these are but types of those manifold perils 'from my countrymen, from the Gentiles, and among false brethren'[9] of which he speaks with so much pathos.

Rarely do the names of his opponents come to the surface, but a few are mentioned; for example,

[1] John xii. 19. [2] Acts xiv. 19. [3] Acts xviii. 12, 13.
[4] Acts xxi. 27, 28. [5] Acts xxiii. 12. [6] Acts xxv. 11.
[7] Rom. ix. 3. [8] Acts xvi. 19–21. [9] 2 Cor. xi. 26.

Elymas the sorcerer,[1] Tertullus the orator,[2] Alexander the coppersmith,[3] and Demetrius the shrine-maker.[4] Demetrius may be left for fuller notice, but concerning the rest a sentence or two will suffice to indicate the motives which lay behind their deeds. Elymas was moved by a spirit of rivalry and the fear of lost prestige ; Tertullus, despite his sycophancy, was probably actuated by no other motive than that of scoring a professional success ; and Alexander, of whom the apostle writes with so much feeling, was a controversialist who allowed his disagreement to develop into personal malice.

But to come to Demetrius. The incident which gives him such an unpleasant notoriety reveals him as a man with AN UTTERLY SECULARIZED HEART. He was an Ephesian, and Ephesus was *temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter.*[5] The worship of Artemis was firmly established in the city. Her magnificent temple was one of the splendours of the world, and at the great festivals multitudes of pilgrims made their way to render their homage at the shrine of the great goddess who was the fount of all fertility, the mother of all life. ' She was implicit in the life of nature ; she was the reproductive power that kept the great world ever the same amid the constant flux of things. Mother of all and nurse of all, she was most really present wherever the unrestrained life of nature was most freely manifested, in the woods, on the mountains, among the wild beasts. Her worshippers expressed their devotion and their belief in her omnipresence by offering shrines to her,

[1] Acts. xiii. 6–8. [2] Acts xxiv. 1–9. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 14.
[4] Acts xix. 24–27. [5] Acts xix. 35.

and doubtless by keeping shrines of the same kind in their own homes, certainly also by placing such shrines in graves beside the corpse, as a sign that the dead had once more gone back to the mother who bore them.'[1] And that meant a lucrative business for the shrine-makers at Ephesus. It is here that the story becomes vital, for Demetrius was engaged in this craft, and was probably the president of the guild of metal-workers at Ephesus. He was unblushingly sordid, and such a lover of self that he had perforce to be the enemy of any and all who stood in his way. And Paul was coming between him and prosperity. Therefore, said Demetrius as he searched his ledgers, Paul must go. There we have the secret of all his hostility, and in the light of it the riot becomes intelligible. Calling his fellow craftsmen together, he says, *Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.*[2] There could be no mistaking his meaning. Diana must not be deposed. Their trade must not be ruined. So they set up a great cry, and the crowd, ever ready to respond to any novel and exciting impulse, caught up the words, either as an affirmation of her acknowledged

[1] Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 126.
[2] Acts xix. 25–27.

glory or an invocation of her help, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, or *Great Diana of the Ephesians*.[1]

And at whose shrine was Demetrius worshipping all this time? Not, as we shall see later, at that of Diana, but at that of Mammon; not at that of the mother of life, but at that of the forerunner of death. He has become so secularized that he has made his goddess a tool, the means whereby he might add to his wealth. That is where Paul's offence lay in his sight. Had there been no conflict between Christianity and idol-making, Paul might have gone on preaching in Ephesus with no word of protest from Demetrius, and Demetrius would have been content to fashion his shrines and hoard his gain. But there was a clash, and Paul must be hounded out of Ephesus. This same motive has given rise to many a kindred opposition. Wherein lay Luther's offence save that he opposed Tetzel's indulgences and thus robbed Rome of gain? For what reasons were the Abolitionists resisted save that their advocacy of emancipation clashed with the greed of the slave-owners? Why do all measures which aim at the repression of the drink traffic of the nation meet with such decided hostility from certain quarters except that they touch powerful vested interests? It is significant that nearly every great ameliorative movement has had to contend at some point in its history with the Demetriuses of the age.

But the thing that makes Demetrius so utterly sordid is that HE GARBED HIS SECULARISM WITH THE CLOAK OF PIETY. St. Luke has made it clear that there was no religious principle at stake with him. There was no conviction in his heart that Paul was

[1] Acts xix. 34.

mistaken and that the worship of Diana was for the spiritual good of the Ephesians. If there had been, the riot his fanaticism created might be regarded in a more lenient light. He was loud in his praise of the goddess, but not for her own sake. It was all a matter of policy. All the while he was declaiming concerning her greatness and magnificence his mind was filled with thoughts of those tell-tale ledgers of his. He was too good a business man to fail to observe that the traffic in silver shrines diminished in proportion to the success of Paul. He was honest enough among his own people to put his primary motive foremost, and it was vulgar honesty. But he was astute enough to know that his private interests were not strong enough to move Ephesus, and so Mammon must wear the mantle of Artemis. Let him say that the trade of the silversmiths was menaced, and he might gain the sympathy of the few; but let him say that Diana was in danger, and all Ephesus would rise in protest. 'When devotion to religion coincides with self-interest, then the fury of fanaticism is resistless.'[1] G. F. Watts has painted Mammon as it ought to be made manifest. It heaps its lap with wealth and circles its brow with gold while it crushes out the innocent life of youth and maiden. But all the while the ears of an ass protrude from the crown, and there is no semblance of pity on its coarse and brutal face. That, doubtless, is Mammon *in undress*. But Mammon sometimes borrows a robe and affects an accent, and lifts its stained hands in horror lest Diana be overthrown. And the trick succeeds until some one discovers the stains.

[1] Rackham, *Acts*, p. 362.

And Ephesus possessed one such keen-sighted man. The ' secretary of the city '[1] saw where the devotion of Demetrius to Diana began and ended, and by his timely intervention saved an ugly situation and quelled the turbulence of the mob. It was not, said he, a question of the greatness of Diana ; every one knew how great she was. It was a question of Demetrius and his imperilled trade. And Demetrius and his guild could find redress in the courts. *Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana . . . ? . . . If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open.*[2] That sane speech put the matter in its right perspective. It swept the mask from the lucre-loving soul of Demetrius. The crowd saw that it had been misled by a motive deeper than that of loyalty to Diana, and fearing a possible retribution for its lawlessness it speedily dispersed. For the time Paul was safe. But he had to leave Ephesus earlier than he intended. Demetrius had been exposed, but for all that he had scored a partial triumph. The trade of the shrine-makers received a new impulse, for every one knew how great was Diana of the Ephesians. Nevertheless, in our New Testament, we have an epistle *' to the Ephesians '* !

[1] So Ramsay renders ' town-clerk.' [2] Acts xix. 35–41.

GALLIO: THE HONOURABLE

The gentleman is the man who is master of himself, who respects himself, and makes others respect him. The essence of gentlemanliness is self-rule, the sovereignty of the soul. It means a character which possesses itself, a force which governs itself, a liberty which affirms and regulates itself, according to the type of true dignity. . . . But from self-respect a thousand other things are derived—such as the care of a man's person, of his language, of his manners; watchfulness over his body and over his soul; dominion over his instincts and his passions; the effort to be self-sufficient; the pride which will accept no favour; carefulness not to expose himself to any humiliation or mortification, and to maintain himself independent of any human caprice; the constant protection of his honour and of his self-respect.

AMIEL.

XXI

Gallio: the Honourable

Of all the men who were unavoidably associated with St. Paul none has been subjected to more paltry and thoughtless misrepresentation than the Proconsul of Achaia. For the many Gallio's reputation has been marred through the perversion of a sentence which, in itself, bears no sinister implication. Here and there, an expositor has had insight enough to perceive, and fairness enough to declare, that he was an honourable Roman judge; but by the rest the innocent statement of St. Luke, *Gallio cared for none of these things*,[1] has been warped into a censure, and to be 'a Gallio' has become a proverb by which those to whom, by their deliberate disregard, religion can make no appeal are designated. Hence we have such words as these: 'He was indifferent to the whole subject of religion. He thought his business as a judge of the law and man of the world was of infinitely more importance than all these things which related to the worship of God and the future world. He looked upon all such subjects with contempt. And so it has happened that Gallio has come down through all the centuries as a synonym for indifference.'

That there is need of a strong word against the religious indifference of the day is all too evident! There are those who view the present-day nonchalant

[1] Acts xviii. 17.

attitude toward religion with genuine distress, especially when they hear it discussed with airy flippancy and unconcern, as though it were a matter of opinion rather than of life—a thing to be accepted or rejected according to the caprice of individual taste, with no appreciable consequences to be expected from either decision! The belief that religion is a mere phase of life with nothing commendable in its choice and nothing reprehensible in its refusal is leaving its baneful influence upon society. The misleading idea that religion does not matter is finding reckless advocates to-day, who, themselves upon the rocks, do not hesitate to

> preach it as a truth
> To those that eddy round and round.

Teaching of this kind, which so adroitly throws off those restraints which have done so much to keep the soul of humanity sweet and pure, and which alters the appeal of religion from 'thou *shalt*' to 'thou *mayest*,' and thus rids it of authority, is sure of a hearing. It is being accepted and acted upon until the Churches are feeling the blight of it, and the vigour and virility of the morality of the many is not only menaced, but also stunted and crippled by it. 'Indifference,' we have been reminded by one of the most careful of our modern novelists, 'is the paralysis of the soul, and that is worse than death.' Emphatically is this true of indifference toward religion, and no word of legitimate protest against it can be too strong.

But we must not go to Gallio for our admonitory example unless we are prepared to violate every canon of fair-play. 'No mortal man is so sweet to

any man as he is to all mankind,' his brother Seneca wrote of him. And again, 'Even those who love my brother Gallio to the very utmost of their power yet do not love him enough.' There is no ground for differing from Seneca's tribute, and that keen-sighted lover of truth, Bengel, pertinently remarks, 'The action of Gallio in this place accords with his whole character.' Between it and an habitual callousness toward religion there is a wide difference, and the ungenerous epithets 'worldly-minded,' 'supercilious,' 'indifferent,' and 'careless' are employed of him only by those who are themselves careless—careless of justice and truth! It is an eager evangelism, and an undiscerning, which injures a good cause and spoils a timely appeal by condescending to a method so manifestly unfair, and it runs the risk of staining its garments. Thoughtful evangelism—that great need of the churches—acts upon the principle that better no text at all than one which is open to intelligent criticism.

Gallio appears on Luke's pages solely as a judge, and it is with his character as such that we are to be concerned. As we follow him in his dealings with the Jews on that memorable day when Paul stood before him, the first thing that fixes our attention is his ALERTNESS OF MIND which enabled him to penetrate the guise of their vengeful accusation. The things for which he had no care were not the truths of the Christian Faith, but rather the tumult and the rough justice meted out to Sosthenes —things that happened outside his court. Luke is explicit enough as he describes the scene, and as he relates the circumstances which brought Paul

before Gallio. The apostle's protracted ministry at Corinth, and the success by which it had been attended, aroused the anger and opposition of the Jews. So much so that when Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, became a convert to the Faith, they endeavoured to find some way of retaliation. And so it happened that when Gallio came fresh into the proconsulship they, hoping to take advantage of his inexperience, and assuming his willingness to gain their favour at the price of unfairness to a defenceless man, drew up a cleverly disguised charge against Paul, and forcibly brought him forward for judgement. *The Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgement-seat, saying, This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.*[1] That word 'law,' with its double meaning—to them, Mosaic; to him, Roman—was dexterously used. Paul was ready to answer, but Gallio had already seen through the subtle guise of the accusation. His mind was made up. The point at issue was one of doctrine, and it did not concern him as a Roman magistrate. They had mistaken him, and found to their chagrin that he was neither inexperienced nor corruptible. *If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves: I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. And he drave them from the judgement-seat.*[2] And this is Gallio the indifferent! Was he not rather Gallio the honourable and the just?

His refusal to interpose in this matter revealed

[1] Acts xviii. 12, 13. [2] Acts xviii. 14–16.

his LOFTINESS OF PRINCIPLE which made for honest decisions.[1] It is no more to be blamed than an English official's refusal in India to arbitrate in purely religious controversies between Mohammedans and Hindus. That a certain hauteur, characteristic of his race, is revealed in his words, and that he treated the Jews with scant courtesy, may be conceded; but his contempt for their attempted perversion of his court by the introduction of a matter so mean and personal and malicious was more than justification for all this. 'Take care,' Marcus Aurelius admonishes himself, 'always to remember that you are a man and a Roman; and let every action be done with perfect and unaffected gravity, humanity, freedom, and justice. And be sure you entertain no fancies which may give check to these qualities. This is possible if you keep clear of rashness, and have nothing of insincerity and self-love to infect you.' Gallio but anticipates the noble Stoic in this!

Hence we discover in him a CONTEMPT FOR INTOLERANT CONTROVERSY which made for religious liberty. His was a genuine hatred of scenes and scorn of shams. To these things he denied the slightest countenance. Though Judaism and Christianity alike were to him superstitions—understanding that word in its most generous sense—yet because the world-policy of Rome made tolerance toward other religions inevitable he would not intermeddle with them. He steadfastly refused to be drawn into a controversy which lay outside his jurisdiction, and he would not be turned aside from justice. Proud and stern he may have been, perhaps also a

[1] See the striking poem by Mr. St. John Lucas, *Gallio*.

little too free with disdainful words and undisguised cynicisms ; yet in all his bearing in this, to him, so trivial matter is there not the evidence of a man, honest, upright, and direct ? Gallio as an example of unstained honour in the discharge of public duty is not unworthy of a place in the pages of the New Testament. He would not pander to prejudice, neither would he stoop to meanness nor swerve from right. And when expediency clashed with principle, and when to be unjust was all too easy, he would not willingly commit a wrong. His dismissal of the case against Paul was inspired, not by his scorn of the Jews, but because he knew that honour demanded it.

And when we come to appraise the value of this act of Gallio, may we not see in it something of a divine intervention ? ' Be not afraid,' God had said to Paul, ' but speak, and hold not thy peace ; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee ; for I have much people in this city.' [1] For a time that promise received an unclouded fulfilment. But afterwards, when the opposition of the Jews arose, through the firmness of Gallio, the will of God was perfected, and Paul remained in Corinth ' yet many days.' Thus men come unconsciously into the divine plan and help to accomplish its gracious purposes. Our deeds may ever be greater than we know !

[1] Acts xviii. 9–11.

LYSIAS: THE PROSAIC

To crush what is spiritual, moral, human—so to speak—in man by specializing him; to form mere wheels of the great social machine, instead of perfect individuals; to make society and not conscience the centre of life; to enslave the soul to things; to depersonalize man, this is the dominant drift of our epoch.

AMIEL.

There is nothing more uncongenial to me, as I move about amid the venerable stones and the subduing presences of Westminster Abbey, than to hear the cold, heartless, wonderless recitals of the official guides.

DR. J. H. JOWETT.

XXII

Lysias: the Prosaic

Claudius Lysias was responsible for the preservation of peace in Jerusalem, and his association with Paul came about by virtue of his office. In a critical and perilous hour he threw about the apostle the protecting mantle of Roman authority, and by saving him from the virulent hate of a plotting and lawless crowd rendered the Christian cause an inestimable service. He acted with wisdom and promptitude and strength, yet he was never conscious that he was under the sway of the divine overruling; and when the demands of the day were met it is almost certain that thought of Paul vanished from his mind. He had done his duty, and that was the end of the matter. Despite all he had seen and heard, the heart of Lysias remained unmoved. He was too busy, too burdened with responsibility, to be impressed by anything which lay outside the range of his duty. Few of all the men who came into contact with Paul left him less influenced toward the Christian religion than Lysias.

We recognize in him, first of all, Qualities of Promptitude and Fearlessness which made him an admirable servant. There is a saying attributed to Epictetus to the effect that circumstances show what men are, and its truth has been demonstrated by the manner in which men of action have acquitted themselves in times of crisis. Lysias, whatever else he was, was a man of action, and it is with this

that Luke is principally concerned. Though his aim is primarily historical, there is a sense in which Luke writes from a psychological point of view. He is ever alive, as he traces the fortunes of Paul's daring ministry, to reveal the character of those who stand related to the central figure. But in the case of Lysias he has little data to work upon. We are, therefore, forced to read between the lines, to study shadows for lack of features, and this construction of approximate facts from merest hints may not always be fair to the person concerned. Yet as the chapters[1] in which Lysias plays so prominent a part unfold their story, may we not get in his mechanical discharge of duty gleams of such soul as he possessed? Imagine, then, a man strong, silent, passionless, lacking the flashing indignation, the stinging scorn, and penetrating insight of a Gallio; a man whose monotonously even life is relieved by neither heights nor depths; a regular, unhesitating, unimaginative man, seeing all things with an official eye and doing all things with a heavy hand; a tool rather than a man, the finished product of the character-crushing discipline by which a Roman soldier was schooled—and in the none too flattering picture are there not features not altogether unlike those of Lysias?

The circumstances which are supposed to reveal the man in the case of Lysias tend rather to reveal the official. Briefly they are these. St. Paul was in Jerusalem on a mission of stupendous importance to the ever-widening horizons of the missionary ideal. He had conferred with James and the Jerusalem leaders, and had 'rehearsed one by one the

[1] Acts xxi. 27–xxiii. 33.

things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.'[1] Upon the warning of James he exhibited that fine conciliatory spirit which was so characteristic of his attitude toward the other apostles, and consented to identify himself with those who were fulfilling the Nazarite vow in the temple, intending, as Dr. Hort suggests, seeing that the time was too short for his discharging the obligations of that vow himself, ' to celebrate this happy event by a solemn peace-offering.' Then the Judaizers set upon him with the false statement, which gained the ears of the city, that he had brought Trophimus of Ephesus into that part of the temple which no Gentile was permitted to enter, and had thereby defiled it. His offence was punishable by death. Tumult inspired by misrepresentation and hate prevailed. The apostle's endeavour to show publicly his reverence for the law had been warped into an alleged attempt to desecrate the sacred building, and the misguided populace sought to slay him.

Then it was that Lysias, who, in the procurator's absence, was in charge of the affairs of the city, hearing the tumult, and associating it with the lawless Sicarii, a band of desperate men who for personal and political reasons did not hesitate to shed blood, came promptly on the scene, and arrested Paul, on the supposition that he was the leader of these riots—*the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins.*[2] Discovering that he was an educated Jewish citizen, he sanctioned

[1] Acts xxi. 19.
[2] Acts xxi. 38. See Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Bk. II. ch. xiii.

his addressing his countrymen and defending himself against the charges which had been brought against him. The address is listened to until the offensive phrase, 'I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles,' could be withheld no longer, and then the commotion began again. Paul is secured, brought within the castle, and at the command of Lysias prepared for examination by scourging. He then makes known that he is a Roman, and immediately Lysias forbids the illegal punishment, and arranges that on the morrow he should appear before the Sanhedrin. This meeting also breaks up in disorder, and once again Lysias rescues his prisoner from peril. A conspiracy to assassinate Paul is revealed to him, and with that promptitude which marked all his actions he sends him safely guarded to Felix at Caesarea. Then Lysias drops out of the story, his service completed, and his name immortalized.

From a certain point of view all this is excellent. It is the action of a strong man whose outstanding gift was an aptitude for the proper exercise of authority. He had the gifts necessary for a capable soldier and administrator, and he did not fail in their use. Such men as he made Roman power invincible. But side by side with these qualities which made him so excellent a servant there was AN UNIMAGINATIVE MATTER-OF-FACTNESS which buried the soul of the man in the service he so faithfully rendered. We never lose sight of the official in Lysias. He never unstrings the bow, never asks a question which reveals the mind of a man behind it, never suffers himself to forget for a little that he is captain of the Roman band. He is a man who has no interest

other than that to which he has been appointed. Felix and Agrippa may listen to Paul from a personal point of view, but not so Lysias. What the apostle had to say on matters of religion was no concern of his ; but let him, or any other, transgress in the least the things which came technically within his province, and the iron hand of Lysias was quick to restrain. There can be no doubt that he was the man for the difficult post at Jerusalem, where a soldier of few words, of strong will, and unflinching courage was needed. It was all so necessary and all so praiseworthy. But it was all so limited. He was duty's loyal liegeman, and he served right faithfully ; but he never got beyond duty without neglecting it, never left the sultry highway for a little that he might enjoy the recreative by-path ; and so it came about that the dead weight of responsibility crushed in him any other ideal of life !

Lysias, then, is a man of marked limitations, yet not a man to be despised. With but little equipment other than that which was necessary for his own particular task, he nevertheless does that duty well. He awes an aggressive crowd into passivity, and saves Paul from an ugly situation. When urgency is needed, he is prompt ; when sternness alone can meet the call of the hour, he is strong ; when his judgement is at fault, he is not slow to cover it with a smart manipulation of facts which we can understand though not condone. He is deferential to a superior and approachable by a subordinate. He has boundless regard for technicalities, and he is careful about minutiae. He does not fear danger, neither does he court disaster. He shrinks from no responsibility he ought to face, and he retains

none he can legitimately transfer. His duty is done to the uttermost with absolute impartiality. He rescues Paul, not because he is Paul, but because he is a man in peril ; and he would rescue the leader of the Sicarii just as readily. Such was Lysias, with all his qualities of lead and gold !

Lysias is very modern. Just as Paul and Luke live to-day in men of massive purpose and fine discernment and lofty aspiration, so does Lysias in the prosaic, faithful men who throng our streets and fill a considerable place in the humdrum round of the world's life. Little can be said against the men whom he typifies, especially when we remember the conditions under which their life is lived. Their good qualities come from without rather than from within. They begin by having their mind burdened rather than sympathetically educated ; they have been made to plough their way through history to master its dry bones, with no one to fire their soul with the pathos and the rapture, the tragedy and the romance, the humanity and the chivalry, which lie behind the facts and give them real interest. Afterwards, when the work of life began, they were crushed into a mould they did not fit, and the dreary recurrence of unvarying occupation shut out poetry, ideality, and even spirituality from their soul, and the nobler part of their nature suffered an inevitable atrophy. We are turning men's eyes to the dusty streets, and they are losing sight of the sky. That the world must have workers, and that the hard roads fulfil their function, and that work may have a sacred implication, is conceded. But however true it is, it is also true that we cramp and destroy the souls of men by too much responsibility

and by overwork ' which leaves the nerves unstrung, the muscles jaded, and the spirits vexed, unsure, and under a curse.' It is not to be wondered at that while some try to get away from it by seeking such forms of pleasure as do not elevate and refine, others simply settle down to a colourless existence which makes bondmen of the free. And what to these is misfortune should be counted as sin in others who, despite ampler opportunity and greater capacity, wilfully limit themselves and dwarf their true life. There should be a proper recognition in life of faithful service. Lysias must receive the honour which is his due. There should also be room in life for the growth of a soul. Lysias must be taught that he is something more than a tool. He must be made to know that he is a man, and that he may become a son of God. And all this is true of all the men of whom Lysias stands as a type !

FELIX: THE ENSLAVED

So was I assured that much better were it for me to give myself up to Thy charity than to give myself over to my own cupidity; but though the former course satisfied me and gained the mastery, the latter pleased me and held me mastered. Nor had I anything to answer Thee calling to me, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. And when Thou didst on all sides show me that what Thou saidst was true, I, convicted by the truth, had nothing at all to answer, but only those dull and drowsy words, 'Anon, anon,' 'presently,' 'leave me but a little.' But 'presently, presently,' had no present, and my 'little while' went on for a long while.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

XXIII

Felix: the Enslaved

It is at the point where the name of Felix should have disappeared from the Acts unstained by any injustice toward Paul that interest begins to fasten upon the character of the procurator. Concerning the legal side of his association with the apostle, there is so little of real importance that, were it not for one arresting phrase, it might be passed over without comment. But that phrase reflects the very soul of Felix, and it is therefore significant. It sometimes happens that in the course of a man's doings one particular act recurs until it attracts attention and distinguishes him. It reveals the mind which lies behind the act and gives it being. It is the soul emerging to the surface; it is the defining mark of individuality. The act hinted at by the simple clause which terminates the trial scene helps us to understand Felix. It prepares the way for the more famous saying which is ever associated with his name. *Felix . . . deferred them*, is of the same nature, though not of the same far-reaching importance, as *Felix . . . answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.*[1] The words need but to be brought together thus to indicate a nature in which indecision and evasion played a considerable part, while the surrounding narrative enables us to trace the origin of these so undesirable traits.

[1] Acts xxiv. 22, 25.

Felix began life as a slave, and as a slave, though of a different order, he ended it. He was never anything other than a slave notwithstanding his procuratorship and the tremendous power he wielded. Tacitus tells us that, and Luke unconsciously confirms it. His term of office had been one of thinly disguised corruption—'Roman administration at its worst'; and from the depths of intrigue, avarice, incontinence, and bloodshed to which he stooped the mind turns with an instinctive loathing. Tacitus gives an honest and fearless description of him when he says, 'He exercised all kinds of barbarity and extravagance as if he had royal authority, but with the disposition of a slave.' It is with such a character that Paul as an ambassador for Christ has to deal, and with the manner in which he acquitted himself St. Luke has made us familiar. His was an entangled life, and our inquiry is concerned with those snares which caught his soul and made him the slave we know him to have been.

In the first place, there was THE BOND OF AVARICE: *He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul.*[1] It was after the apostle had answered the charges which Tertullus had preferred against him, by denying the accusations of sedition and desecration, and by confessing devotion to the cause of Christ, that Felix hesitated in the discharge of duty. Paul had made it clear that he was no heretic by showing that the religious movement to which his life was committed—the Faith which was finding its way everywhere, and was stirring the hearts of men with a new life and inspiring them with a new

[1] Acts xxiv. 26.

ideal—was the spiritual fulfilling of that Messianic hope which every normal Jew claimed to hold. Unless his judgement was altogether warped, Felix could scarcely avoid seeing that the whole matter on the part of Paul's accusers was personal and malicious, and that the proper course for him was that which Gallio had previously adopted, the more so as he had what Gallio did not possess, *a more exact knowledge concerning the way*.[1] The case against Paul had not been proved, and, seeing that Lysias had stated clearly that nothing worthy of death or of bonds had been laid to his charge, he knew that justice demanded an acquittal. But Felix reasoned with his better self that over against justice there were other considerations which were not without weight with him. There was the claim of policy and of greed. Hence he determined to use the apostle as a tool. Greatly as he scorned the Jews, he knew how impolitic it would be to anger them by releasing their prisoner; and beyond all that there was the hope of the offer of a bribe, which he would not hesitate to accept. 'It was a defect in Roman law that, though it ordered the immediate trial of a prisoner sent to a supreme court with an *elogium*' (such as that which the escort sent by Lysias carried), 'it laid down no rule as to the necessary termination of his trial, and thus put into the hands of an unjust praefect a formidable instrument of torture.'[2]

Felix readily availed himself of that weak point in the law he was expected to administer, and, acting according to that fateful tendency to indecision which has made his name notorious, he became

[1] Acts xxiv. 22. [2] Farrar, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, p. 552.

guilty of a dereliction of duty, and covered the same by the plausible excuse of suspending judgement until the coming of Lysias. Lysias never came; the case against Paul was never reopened by Felix, and during the remainder of his procuratorship he toyed with the apostle, keeping him under a restraint which, despite its clemency, could be nothing less than galling. For two years[1] the Church was deprived of Paul's personal leadership. Who can say what that gap may imply? If not absolute silence and inactivity, yet practically such. While, on account of this, the common soldiers might rally themselves to greater effort, it is more likely that the fortunes of the battle would fluctuate because of the enforced absence of their acknowledged leader. All this is traceable to the indecision of Felix, and that indecision had its origin in a lust of gold. *I came to bring arms to my nation, and offerings*,[2] Paul had said, and at the mention of money thought of justice took a secondary place in the mind of Felix. Here was a man who had wealth at his command, a man, therefore, who was in the position to offer a bribe. It simply required time. Hence the deferred judgement. When greed becomes the controlling force of action, man becomes a slave. He is rendered unscrupulous and a stranger to healthy liberty and independence. Demetrius of Ephesus creates a riot, Alcibiades betrays his city, and Judas sells his Lord—all for gain, and the gain in each case meant loss, the loss of character. With such an example as Felix before us how forceful are the words of the apostle: 'They that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare,

[1] Acts xxiv. 27. [2] Acts xxiv. 17.

. . . for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.'[1]

Further, there was THE BOND OF SENSUALITY : *Felix came with Drusilla, his wife.*[2] Thus, with a word or two, Luke hastens past the grosser side of Felix's life of sin. It is said of Fra Angelico that he could paint the angels because he had seen them, but that he made poor work of the devils because to him they were strange creatures. The saying helps us to understand the silence of Luke concerning the tainted history of Felix and Drusilla. His sympathies are with the pure in heart, and he is unwilling to disturb a muddy pool. Felix had enticed this ambitious and altogether shallow-hearted daughter of Herod Agrippa to leave her lawful husband and to share his guilty and abandoned life. Conventionally she became his wife, and of this Luke says nothing definitely. But what a picture he gives of Paul as the apostle deals with this sordid fact ! How reminiscent it is of his companion-picture of the Baptist and Herod ![3] Felix had summoned Paul into his presence only to find that Paul in the palace was a very different man from Paul in the Judgement Hall. There he was on his trial, and he confined himself to the matters of the hour ; but in the palace Felix was, so to say, on his trial before Paul, and the apostle did not fail to probe the most sensitive point in the conscience of his hearer.

It has been said that Paul was between two choices

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

[2] Acts xxiv. 24. The Bezan MS. tells us it was at Drusilla's request. 'Felix came with Drusilla . . . who asked to see Paul and hear the Word. Being willing, therefore, to satisfy her, he sent for Paul.'

[3] Luke iii. 19.

in this matter—that of gaining liberty by the exercise of worldly-wisdom, and that of gaining a soul for a purer life by an uncompromising dealing with his sin. It is greatly to be doubted whether he ever felt the force of the former of these alternatives; but if he did it was more for the gospel's sake than for his own. When the opportunity came he did not swerve from his high calling. He *reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgement to come.*[1] 'God hath not sent me,' said John Knox to Queen Mary, 'to wait upon the courts of princes, but to preach the evangel of Jesus Christ. It hath two parts—Repentance and Faith. Now, madam, in preaching Repentance, of necessity it is that the sins of men be so noted that they may know wherein they offend.' Paul's was a great heart-searching appeal, as courteous as courageous, direct to the soul of Felix. And Felix quailed before it. But conscience can only warn and guide, it cannot compel. In the famous words of Butler, 'Had it might as it has right, had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world.' *Felix was terrified.*[2] It may be that he longed for a purer life, but the bond of his sin tightened upon his soul, and he dismissed Paul.

Then, finally, there was THE BOND OF CONVENTIONALITY. Felix's sin involved another life, and with Drusilla by his side decision for that purer life was out of the question. It is hard for a soul to break from a bondage such as that. Harold Begbie, in *Broken Earthenware*,[3] tells of one in whose heart the springs of a new life were opening who

[1] Acts xxiv. 25. [2] Acts xxiv. 25. [3] p. 186.

pleaded with the partner of his previous sin to become sharer in his present salvation only to be ridiculed, taunted, and persecuted by her. 'It would have been easier,' he says, 'for some people, perhaps, to face a den of lions.' That was the difficulty which confronted Felix and made reclamation for him virtually impossible. He had to reckon with Drusilla, and she was unmoved by Paul's words. A pampered, canker-hearted woman, there was little hope of her reformation; a Jewess, and therefore little hope of her becoming a Christian —with such a bond was Felix held. Forsake her he could not, and ought not, for to her he owed a duty. And Rome? Rome would deride him and call him fool. 'Felix, a Nazarene!' How deliciously *outré* the impulse was! How the gay world to which he belonged would revel in the joke of it! Felix feared his 'set,' and the dread of a sneer restrained any noble impulse in his soul. There was nothing for it but to dismiss Paul. And his is a modern problem. Men convinced of sin fear to accept Christ. They dread becoming singular; they will 'lose caste.' The bond which the conventions of their companionships forge around them binds them down to all that is lowest. In certain sponge formations there are fragments of silica which are ever attracting other particles to themselves until the whole mass is an aggregate of siliceous matter and the sponge ultimately becomes a flint. So is it with the fellowships of the world. They draw other souls unto themselves, harden them by the contact, and render them irresponsive and worthless.

Felix answered . . . when I have a convenient

season, I will call thee unto me.[1] He kept his word. *He sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.*[2] But never again did he tremble at the word. He had dallied with conviction; he had tampered with conscience; and he had never realized that in delaying his choice he had really chosen. But chosen he had. And he had made the wrong choice by refusing to choose. He looked for a to-morrow only that it might rid him of the responsibility of the present hour. Thomas Fuller tells how he promised amendment on future dates, only to find that it was then just as difficult. 'Now,' says this sturdy soul, 'I am resolved thus to befool myself no longer. I see no day but to-day; the instant time is always the fittest.' Note that word, 'befool myself,' for that is what delay in spiritual things really means. There is such a thing as the vengeance of a neglected opportunity. Age tends to conservatism in habit, and to-morrow becomes harder than to-day. 'There is one case of death-bed repentance recorded,' says Augustine, 'that no one should despair; and only one, that no one should presume.'

[1] Acts xxiv. 25. [2] Acts xxiv. 26.

FESTUS: THE IMPULSIVE

I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts.

JOHN LOCKE.

Propriety is one great matter in the conduct of life; which, though, like a graceful carriage of the body, it is neither definable nor striking at first sight, is the result of finely balanced feelings, and lends a secret strength and charm to the whole character. . . . Well-digested schemes will stand the touchstone of experience.

HAZLITT.

In extraordinary events ignorance of their causes produces astonishment.

CICERO.

XXIV

Festus: the Impulsive

Festus has gained an unfortunate reputation because in a hasty moment he gave expression to an infelicitous phrase concerning Paul. But on other grounds than that, because by his intervention he brought things to a climax by provoking the famous appeal to Caesar, he deserves recognition in that group of Roman officials whose names are permanently fixed in sacred history because of their association with the apostle. As we read what St. Luke says of him, or allows him to say of himself, and compare it with what Josephus also says of him, we may discover certain facts which enable us to estimate his character.

Each of these writers would have us see that Festus was frequently under the dominance of momentary impulses which make strength of character impossible. Yet he was almost strong, and but for one outstanding defect, a neglect of the necessity of thinking things out to their final issues, he would have been altogether so. But thought to him was subordinate to action, and as a consequence his deeds were generally within the region of the dangerous. And it is with the results of that defect in a man of excellent intentions and sterling principles that we are now concerned.

The first noticeable thing about him is Haste Mistaken for Promptitude. Whatever Festus did was done with energy, and with little else. From

the day that he became procurator in the place of Felix matters relating to Paul began to move rapidly. He was a man of finer nature than Felix. He was altogether void of the sordidness and shallow subtlety of his predecessor, and immediately he appears upon Luke's pages we see in him a determination to act a straightforward and manly part. His motives, despite the construction that has been put upon the words *desiring to gain favour with the Jews*,[1] were perfectly sincere. It was nothing short of monstrous to him that a prisoner should have been kept by Felix for two years without the opportunity of a fair and conclusive trial; and concerning his own attempt to put the matter right, he says to Agrippa, *I made no delay, but on the next day sat down on the judgement-seat, and commanded the man to be brought.*[2] The same quickness of action characterized all his administration. No sooner does he receive his appointment than he hastens to Caesarea. After three days he goes to Jerusalem, where he hears certain accusations against Paul. Eight or ten days suffice him at Jerusalem, and he returns to Caesarea with the chief of the apostle's accusers, *and on the morrow he sat down on the judgement-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought.*[3] And later, after the appeal to Caesar had been granted, when Agrippa expressed the wish to hear Paul himself Festus readily agrees: *To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.*[4] There was no dalliance about Festus!

From one point of view all this was admirable; it was so manifestly honest. Had Felix possessed something of the same disposition, how different

[1] Acts xxv. 9. [2] Acts xxv. 17. [3] Acts xxv. 6. [4] Acts xxv. 22.

things might have been with Paul! Not only might two years of precious ministry have been gained for the Christian Church, but the enmity which all that time had been smouldering in the hearts of the Jews might have been stamped out. The hesitation of Felix was construed by them into a triumph of their unrighteous cause. They had but to wait! But Festus's haste lacked one essential quality, discrimination. He mistakes bustling haste for promptitude, and because he is so precipitate he lacks that sober judgement which makes for secure action. He had had no time to gather the necessary information to deal with a case like this. Great decisions cannot be arrived at in a moment, and Festus had not thought of that. Perhaps he had not regarded the matter as important, but that is the mistake the superficially-minded so often make. They do not reflect that things which appear insignificant upon the surface may carry far-reaching issues. And so the morrow found Festus upon the judgement-seat eager to deal with a subject he did not understand. It was the folly of speed without discrimination. It was the rashness which precedes disaster. Progress in a good cause can only be attained by taking time and pains to secure essential facts, and an impulsive pushing forward of things may defeat the very purpose it aims at accomplishing!

Mingling with all Festus's haste there was A HESITANCY WHICH AROSE FROM UNCERTAINTY. Were they not so tragic, the hesitations of the impulsive in the midst of a deed would be interesting. And Festus provides us with examples of this. Again and again he arrives almost at a decision, and

before it is mature he partly commits himself to it. Then a conflicting plea presents itself, and under its influence he wavers and reverses his former judgement. Because he never took the trouble to inform himself, and never thought a thing out before he began to act, he was always unsure whenever there was a clash of impulses. He is a type of those who are always under the necessity of finding a way of escape. Observe his action concerning Paul. When at Jerusalem he had given his decision that Paul should be tried at Caesarea, but when the apostle is brought before him there he suggests that after all Jerusalem might be the more desirable place. To this Paul demurs, and Festus immediately recalls his words and consents to the trial proceeding at Caesarea. It seems so simple, but it reveals the flaw in Festus's strength. Josephus gives us another illustration of this same weakness. Agrippa had built a large dining-room which overlooked the temple, and in their anger at this the chief men of the city erected a wall which intercepted the view. This they cunningly contrived to form part of the temple. Festus, acting in Agrippa's behalf without thinking whither the matter would lead, ordered the demolition of the offending structure. To this the Jews refused, vowing that they would rather die than destroy any part of the sacred building. Then Festus lamely consented to their appealing to Nero, and the emperor, through the influence of Poppea, decided the case in their favour. In these hesitations we recognize a habit. The man who takes a strong attitude, even though it be an unwise one, and then habitually recedes from it, is always at the mercy

of his opponents. Let him have no certain groundwork, and the critical moment will find him torn by divergent forces and at a loss how to act. It is not to be wondered at that Festus has to excuse himself by the plea of *being perplexed*.[1] He had hastened where hesitation would have been seemly, and then when crisp, unyielding action was imperative he is forced to indecision.

Festus betrays the same rashness in his UNDISCERNING CRITICISMS. As he listens to Paul's impassioned appeal to Agrippa he becomes impatient, and says, *Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness.*[2] Festus's words lie near the surface, and they leap to his lips without reflection. It was so in this instance. Some have discovered in them a parallel to those judgements which were passed upon Jesus. 'When His friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on Him; for they said, He is beside Himself.'[3] 'There arose a division among the Jews . . . and many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad.'[4] It is, however, open to question whether either is a perfect parallel. In the case of His friends it was a criticism of that quality in Jesus which evoked the enthusiasm of the multitude. Even if it is allowed to stand, it is to be noticed that it arose from misunderstanding and the chief element in it was pity. Painful though it must have been to Him, He would know how to interpret it. But in the case of the Jews the verdict was sinister. It came from the depth of their ungenerous hearts. They found satisfaction in what they said. It was more than misunderstanding; it was malevolence. And between this and Festus's

[1] Acts xxv. 20. [2] Acts xxvi. 24. [3] Mark iii. 21. [4] John x. 19, 20.

loud words there is nothing of kinship. Allowing for the loud and indecorous interruption, and what have we even then? A misconception; an impatience; but no ill-will. His *Paul, thou art mad* is but the criticism of the uninitiated, and it reveals the mind of Festus rather than his heart. In this phrase which has immortalized him we see that same tragic lack of thought which characterized his words and deeds. He could not see things as Paul saw them, neither could he feel as Paul felt. And because of this he became impatient, and voiced the verdict of the uninitiated. And criticisms as undiscerning as his still persist. Fervour is still interpreted as frenzy, faith as superstition, spirituality as sentiment. And when the criticism comes from high places and has power behind it, it is more far-reaching in baleful results than wilful in intention. A condescending, half-pitying, half-taunting phrase sometimes neutralizes the force of a good cause.

It is commonly supposed that for a certain type of mind premeditation is impossible. But is it so? While concentration of ideas may vary in different persons, some degree of prudential anticipation is given to all men; and the ability to forecast the whitherward of an action once begun is indispensable to the best interests of life. This Festus overlooked. He was no more deficient in the possibilities of reflection than other men. He was lacking only in its use. It seems a small matter, but it proved the weakness of the otherwise strong. All that is worst in him—all his impetuosity, all his wavering, all the harshness of his loud interruption, all the unwisdom of his unpondered criticism—may be traced

to this so small and yet so significant defect. And the moral of all this has been stated by a recent writer in terms which are not so unpardonably cynical as they appear : 'Think, learn to think. It will profit you—there is so little competition.'

AGRIPPA: THE SUPERFICIAL

Conscience, righteousness; what is there new in these? Their maxims are as old as the hills. The novelty of righteousness is not in itself, but in its application to the particular unrighteousness of a particular age. It was thus that Jesus applied to the sins and mock sanctities of His day the ancient truths known to the prophets, and to others long before Him. It is thus that every new reformer will seek to bring home to the men of his generation what it is that the ancient standard of right and justice requires at their hands.

FELIX ADLER.

XXV

Agrippa: the Superficial

In the whole of Luke's narrative there is no more impressive scene than that of the happenings at Caesarea on the day when Festus granted Agrippa's request to hear St. Paul. Festus himself was bent on making the occasion impressive. He was receiving a complimentary visit from Agrippa and Bernice, and though he had a purely practical purpose in view when he cited the case of Paul,[1] he could not miss such an opportunity for display. His Roman heart revelled in the spectacular, and he determined that the day in which he sat by the side of the Herods should be one of splendour. A multitude of motives dictated it, and Festus was not unwilling. He would gratify the vanity of this titular king; he would display his newly acquired power as procurator; and he would ingratiate himself in the goodwill of the chief men of the city. And so the gaudy ceremony, in which there was no vestige of administrative worth, was arranged. It was as hollow a thing as Festus ever did, but it was all done to impress.

And Agrippa and Bernice did not fail to act their part of mimic greatness. They were in Caesarea because it was good policy for them to be there. But beneath all their surface cordiality there could be nothing but bitterness against that power which had shorn them of their rights. Rome had a way of

[1] Acts xxv. 25–27.

taking all real authority from those whom it subdued, while it left them the empty semblance of that which had once been their own. And, to add to the humiliation, it did not hesitate to put over them some successful soldier who had risen from the ranks, or some court favourite fortunate enough to gain the advocacy of influential men. And Agrippa had been made to feel through the velvet glove the iron hand of Rome. He was a king, but not of the Jews. Claudius had given him a show of favour, but had denied him his father's kingdom. A paltry recompense had been made him when at the death of his uncle he was granted the tetrarchy of Chalcis, and later still when this was exchanged for those of Philip and Lysanias. To this Nero added a few cities in Galilee and Peraea. But it was all of favour, not of right. Thus he owed everything to Rome—Rome that had taken from him everything he ought to have had. We can understand, therefore, with what feelings Agrippa and Bernice went to Caesarea to pay their respects to Rome. But being there they too must needs be impressive; they could not be outshone by Festus.

And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus—for though Agrippa and Bernice may display great pomp it is Festus who commands—*Paul was brought in.*[1] And from that moment he, not Festus and not Agrippa, becomes the centre of attraction. Manacled, and worn with confinement, he was nevertheless the true king in that assembly, and on his face alone was

[1] Acts xxv. 23.

the calm of reality. To him, although he knew as well as any that it had no judicial power, the occasion presented an opportunity the like of which he had never had before. And of the manner in which he seized and used it Luke has made us acquainted by his altogether impressive report. For Luke never gave a more realistic representation of anything than of Paul's bearing in the presence of Herod Agrippa.

But it is of Agrippa that we are to think—of the spirit he displayed as he listened to Paul, and of the way in which he parried that shaft which, had it properly reached its mark, would have made him a king among men in spite of Rome. And we shall see that listening as he did, and acting as he did, he left that audience chamber as he entered it—a man whose only interest in the Christian religion was that of curiosity, and whose only response to it was that of evasion!

His Only Interest in Christianity was that of Curiosity. It is difficult to do justice to Agrippa. It is so easy for us to forget the times in which he lived and the family from which he sprang. We cannot with fairness bring our modern standards to bear upon such men as he. For generations the name of the Herods had been stained with vice and cruelty, and the balance was all against Agrippa. Crime was in his blood, and irreligion was in the society to whose standards he was expected to conform. Although he was a Jew by birth, he had been educated in Rome, and had spent much of his time in a city where he must have felt the impact of pagan influences. Yet he never actually turned his back upon his

national Faith. He was interested also in all matters affecting the Jews, whether social or religious; and though he gained disfavour by his arbitrary use of the religious powers which were vested in him, yet he was anything but renegade. And when Paul stood before him it was with perfect honesty that he could bear witness to his expert knowledge of all the customs and questions which were among the Jews. In all that goes to make a name and yet misses that for which the name stands he was a son of Israel. But in the vital things—the things which lift a religion out of its cold formulae and thrust it into the pulsing realities of life—Agrippa was as much a pagan as Festus by whose side he sat. His religion never reached his heart, and never sweetened the springs of his conduct. It never saved him from caprice and superficiality, and its denunciation of that sin which so deeply stained his soul never moved him to a purer mode of living. He had ability to expound a creed without sincerity enough to translate it into a life.

And from this strangely complex nature came the desire to hear Paul. He had often heard of the Christian Faith, but it had always been represented to him as a fanaticism. Yet here, away from Jerusalem, and at the request of Festus, was an opportunity of hearing that man whose enthusiasm for the Nazarene had filled the Jews with bitterest hate. The freak religion could mean nothing to him. But still he would hear Paul. At least it would provide a diversion and relieve the ennui of the distasteful visit. Now, we may say that all this was on the surface, that it was a passing fancy begotten of

curiosity, and doubtless we shall be within the mark. But when we have said all that, we have but stated the bald fact without investigating its underlying cause. What is that something within the soul of an Agrippa whch impels him to even the shallowest interest in the things of a Paul? Is it not the emergence of some better strain in his soul? Is it not the feeling of his spirit after the satisfaction of some need he dimly realizes and hardly understands? It may fade as quickly as it came, and leave the soul as sterile as it found it; but for the moment it kindles a desire which even when it has spent itself leaves its witness in the cold ashes which remain. A religion which is vital is always a challenge, but when the interest it arouses is mainly that of curiosity it allures the mind only to leave the life untouched. So was it with Agrippa. He listened, and he was moved by what he heard; yet not in such a way as to be won and held by it. He was able at its close to deliver an opinion which satisfied Festus, but he did not express such an acquiescence as Paul —hoping, it may be, against hope—had had in view.

His Only Response to Christianity was that of Evasion. With the motive and method and substance of Paul's appeal we are familiar; so familiar, indeed, as to stand in danger of losing the sense of its surpassing fitness. It is our custom to call it an apologia, but it is that and something more. All the while the apostle was speaking of the Faith and of his relation to it he never lost sight of Agrippa; and as the defence proceeds it becomes an attack, and as it ends it is nothing less than a bold bid for Agrippa's soul. It had its rise in those deep

sanctions of a man's innermost life which entitle him to plead with another in the behalf of sacred things. For the good of Agrippa Paul lays bare the cherished facts of his own experience, and tells how God assailed his soul and claimed him for a higher service. He is speaking to one of Jewish blood, versed in all matters relating to the ancient religion, and he vindicates the new Faith to which he had committed himself by showing that it was the consummation of that hope which had ever sustained the soul of Israel's truest sons. He is speaking to a man, and he proclaims that gospel which is able to make all men, whether Jew or Gentile, the spiritual sons of God. In all he says there is the calm of a man who thinks and the heat of one who feels. And the purpose of it all was to persuade one who knew the truth to live according to the truth he knew.

And what was its effect? Did Agrippa in that crucial hour become 'almost a Christian'? Did the apostle all but gain for the Christ the last of the Herods? As Agrippa listened he came to see that the Christian Faith was not the empty bubble he had taken it to be. He was forced to recognize that that which could satisfy the mind and gain the devotion and fire the enthusiasm of a man like Paul could not be an unreality. He was fascinated, and yet ill at ease. That which had promised to be a welcome diversion had taken an unpleasant turn. Paul had got more closely home to his conscience than he cared to admit. Festus perceived his irritation, and sought to end a scene which was becoming intolerable. But Paul would not be turned aside. *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know*

that thou believest! To this direct appeal Agrippa has but one answer to give: *With but little persuasion thou wouldest make me a Christian.*[1] It is, perhaps, the cleverest saying in the New Testament. It attempted to veil what was really an evasion with a piece of supercilious raillery. Alford protests against the 'me' of that saying being understood as emphatic, and grammatically he is correct. But the emphasis is there in intention. Agrippa was not wanting in the vanity of the Herods, and to him the term 'Christian' was one of contempt. Yet here was a man who was shortly to appear in bonds before Caesar attempting to make a Herod a Christian. '"The prophets," did you say? And what if I do believe the prophets? Do you suppose that your slender argument will persuade me to become a Christian like yourself?' And then Agrippa said in action what Festus put into words. The thought was nothing short of madness! With Paul's noble retort ringing in his ears Agrippa rose, and the scene was at an end. There was but one other answer that he could have given, but he would not have been 'the superficial' had he made it.

Agrippa's story touches the practices of our modern life. There is no lack of religious knowledge in the world to-day. Religious instruction finds a place in the curriculum of our public schools; our libraries are full of biblical literature; our churches abound on every hand. And as a consequence there is a deep piety in the heart of many. But many others go to one of two extremes—they either dismiss cavalierly all thought of practising the things they know, or they evade its claims by putting

[1] Acts xxvi. 27, 28.

a confessedly splendid morality in the place of a deeper religious experience. Men know the truth; and the Christian appeal is that they live according to the truth they know. 'If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.'[1]

[1] John xiii. 17.

THE REST: THE UNRECORDED

What a huge multitude come under the category of 'nobodies'! Their names are on the register of births and on the register of deaths, and the space between is a great obscurity. . . . Thank God for the commonplace people! They turn our houses into homes, and make life restful and sweet. We could spare the roses rather than the blades of grass. We can do without genius better than we can do without homeliness.

Dr. J. H. Jowett.

What an idealist Paul was! What an appreciation of Christian character he had when he described these nameless believers as reflections of the splendour of Christ. To common eyes they might be commonplace men; but when Paul looked at them he saw the dawning of that brightness in which the Lord appeared to him by the way. Contact with the grimy side of human nature did not blind him to this radiance; rather did this glory of Christ in men's souls strengthen him to believe all things, to hope all things, to endure all things.

Dr. James Denney.

XXVI

The Rest: the Unrecorded

Among the minor characteristics of Holy Scripture its silences hold a not inconsiderable place. Frequently when we would fain have a fuller record we have to content ourselves with the merest hint. A striking example of this is to be found within the apostolate itself. Of the Twelve whom Jesus attracted to Himself, one half live in the memory of the Christian Church by the simple fact that their names occur in the list of the apostles. These men played their part within the shadows and the silences; no genial light falls upon them, and no generous tribute is ever paid them. We are granted no glimpse of their personal qualities, no record of any word they ever uttered, no suggestion of anything they ever did or attempted to do; they are just names to us. Yet would it not be unfair to them, and would it not reflect upon the judgement of our Lord, to suppose that they were characterless men who, without any fitness for such a choice, were selected merely to complete the group of the Twelve? They were average rather than colourless souls, content to be near the Master, to identify themselves with His cause, and to yield their obedience to His will even as did the rest. And it was this lack of differentiating quality that sealed the lips of the evangelists. Yet it will be remembered that the names of *all* the Twelve were graven on the foundations of the city of God![1]

[1] Rev. xxi. 14.

From this point of view, how significant are the comparative silences concerning the many who were either befriended by St. Paul or gave of the warmth of their affection to him! As we read the Acts and light upon names which are either shrouded by silence, or at most are illumined by but a phrase, we cannot resist contemplating the possibilities of the unrecorded, although we know that the silence must needs be. Take, for example, the group in ch. xiii. 1, *Symeon that is called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch.* Symeon and Lucius may not be specially attractive; but what would we not give to know something more of that foster-brother of Herod? Think of Judas Barsabbas, who accompanied Silas to Antioch;[1] of Jason, who gave security for Paul during the riot at Thessalonica;[2] and of Tyrannus, who put his lecture-hall at his disposal 'after business hours.'[3] How the mind lingers over Julius of the Augustan band, who *treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go to his friends and refresh himself*![4] How gratefully does St. Luke recall Publius of Melita, *who received us, and entertained us three days courteously*![5] What possibilities cluster round the name of Clement in Phil. iv. 3, and how beautiful is Paul's testimony concerning Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus in 1 Cor. xvi. 17, 18! Each of these may have been very commonplace, but does not the silence, or what amounts practically to silence, give to all of them a certain charm and attractiveness? And when we

[1] Acts xv. 22. [2] Acts xvii. 9.
[3] Acts xix. 9. See Ramsay, *Paul the Traveller*, p. 271.
[4] Acts xxvii. 3. [5] Acts xxviii. 7.

search the Epistles with the same purpose in view, we discover that, while some of them yield practically nothing, others give abundant evidence of the wealth of friendship with which the life of the apostle was enriched. It is evident that the people behind these names were loved by Paul, and, doubtless, had he chosen he could have written gracious tributes to their worth. But the majority of his friends come within the circle of the unnamed—the Ephesian elders, for example[1]—of whom Paul could have spoken with affection and honest pride, but all of whom are simply included in that altogether delightful grouping which more than atones for any omission of individual recognition, *the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*[2] How typical these are of the countless souls who have been a shelter and an inspiration to the more distinguished, but of whom there is no abiding earthly record! They have gone about the by-ways of life doing their duty quietly, lovely in their modesty and unobtrusiveness, and satisfied in that they have helped to hasten the progress of the triumph of their Lord by befriending those who carry upon their hearts the burden of the Churches, and who without that comradeship might have known something of the bitterness of despair.

There is one chapter in which Paul allows his heart to speak of its debt to the obscure. In its way the final chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is without parallel. In a sense it is a classic of Christian friendship, and while it perpetuates the memory of his otherwise unknown friends at Rome—for

[1] Acts xx. 17–38.
[2] Phil. iv. 3. See Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 168–171.

we cannot accept Deissmann's theory that it was intended for the church at Ephesus—it also does no little to bring the apostle close home to the hearts of men. There are those who feel as they approach the massive argument of the Epistle how far Paul is beyond them; but when they come to these closing salutations all this is changed, and they begin to realize how near he is to them after all. What urbanity there is in it! what ingenuousness! what delicacy of touch and fineness of feeling! what revealings of a heart that knew the worth of sympathy and comradeship, of help and affection! It is a portrait of Paul quite as much as of his associates. But it is of them that we are to think, and of the qualities which commended them to him. And as we do so we remember that his friends at Rome were but typical of the many in every church of whom kindred things might have been said.

As we read this list of names we are impressed by its DIVERSITY. To begin with, we notice *a significant blending of nationalities*. Aquila, Andronicus, Junias, and Herodion were Jews; Urbanus, Ampliatus, Rufus, Julia, and possibly Prisca, were Romans; the rest were Greeks. There you have the missionary ideal crystallized. Then there are *grades of social status*. Some, as Rufus and Hermes, were slaves; others, as Urbanus and Patrobas, were freedmen and persons of social influence and power. Further, from the expressions of endearment which are associated with certain names it may be inferred that there were inevitable *varieties of personal qualities*. Some had gained a deeper and more central place in his heart than others; and so,

while some are merely named, a few are spoken of as *beloved, approved in Christ, chosen in the Lord.* And there are also *differences in the degree of service rendered to the Church.* Some *laboured in the Lord,* while others *bestowed much labour* or *laboured much in the Lord.* Such were the points of contrast in the Roman Church !

But within this group, in which there was necessarily so much diversity, there was also a delightful UNITY, of which we have the secret in such phrases as *in the Lord,* or *in Christ.* Whatever their gifts may have been, whether great or small, and whatever distinctions there may have been in their social conditions, whether high or lowly, everything found its focus in the Lord. They were bound together by spiritual ties. They owed everything to Him, and because He was not ashamed to call them brethren they found in their relationship to Him the ground of their fellowship with one another. Faction is simply another name for remoteness from Christ. But to love Him and to be near to Him means to love and to be drawn near to those whom He loves. He is the true unifier. And these friends of Paul had found their oneness there. And there, too, should we find ours. Those who call Him Lord should

> Needful to each other prove ;
> Use the grace on each bestowed,
> Tempered by the art of God.

And this because

> Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
> Rendered all distinctions void.

And all this, and the many other things that are suggested in this chapter, witness to the GRACE which dwelt so richly in the heart of his friends. 'You will observe,' writes one of our great pulpit princes of a decade ago, 'that the apostle connects the highest encomium with some names, and mentions others without commendatory remark. . . . Imagine the Church assembled to hear this letter. To one name there is a compliment, to another none! Amplius is "my beloved in the Lord," while not a word is said about Philologus or Julia! Andronicus and Junia are "of note among the apostles," while Nerius and his sister are coldly mentioned, without a flower being flung to either of them! Apelles is "approved in Christ"; but not a word is said about Olympas! Think what jealousy might have been fired in the Roman breast!—what spite, what envy, what revenge!' The case is pungently put, and it needs no other comment than that it reflects the modern temper of some within the Churches. But that these friends of his could endure his speaking of them thus, paying tributes to some, dismissing others without a word, and passing over still more without so much as the mention of their names, is really the finest testimony to that grace which possessed their hearts and enabled them to think no evil. In a community where such things are possible envy can never find an abiding place. Where grace reigns, sincerity may speak without fear of suspicion or misunderstanding. And that we dare not do it to-day is proof of the distance we have travelled from the simplicity of the manners of those early days when Christian men knew not only how to measure the meaning of words, but also to

appreciate the motive which lay behind them. Paul dared to open his heart, not because he was dull to the consequences of indiscriminate praise-bestowing, but because he knew his friends, and was secure in their capacity to understand. And by saying nothing of so many of them he paid them tacitly a compliment of the highest order. These were the men who might form a worthy background to his great Hymn to Love.

Such were the friends of Paul; such were the saints in Caesar's household. In the midst of the flagrant vices and the deep-rooted worldliness with which they were perpetually surrounded they maintained a strong faith and lived an unstained life. From the palace of Nero they sent affectionate salutations to their fellow believers; but the finest message they ever sent was that truest saintliness is possible even in the midst of forces which are unblushing in their corruptness and relentless in their opposition. And that message is with us still.

Southampton Times Co. Ltd.,
Printers and Bookbinders,
70 Above Bar Southampton.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

F'cap. 8vo. Cloth Gilt. **1s. 6d.** net. (Postage 3d.)

FOR JOY'S SAKE

STUDIES IN THE TEACHING OF ST. JOHN

SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

'A volume rich in spiritual thought and feeling, alive with practical wisdom, and sure in its application of the teaching of St. John to Christian character and life. . . . The writing is clear, direct, and succinct; some of the sentences are polished aphorisms; every page witnesses to a noble restraint of thought, and speech, and feeling. It is such a book as a devout spirit may take apart into its loneliest and holiest places, and find it a stepping-stone to a deeper fellowship with those great teachings of which it so simply and so devoutly speaks.'
Methodist Recorder.

'An elegant little volume. . . . The book is a series of studies, not sermons in disguise, nor sermons at all, but just such expository and devotional instructions as are exactly suitable for the class-meeting. Mr. Seekings evidently does not go to his class without thoughtful preparation, and any leader who follows his example will find this little book extremely helpful.'—*Methodist Times.*

'The titles are themselves tempting . . . and the studies show a wide knowledge of the best books on the Epistle, and much skill in setting forth the salient features of the apostle's teaching. Mr. Seekings' quotations and illustrations are very happy, and his little volume will be seized on as a real treasure by those who wish to find helps in cultivating their own devotional life, or ministering to others. It is a first book, full of promise.'—*The London Quarterly Review.*

'This little volume—most attractive in its general appearance—will go far to gain for its author the recognition he deserves. . . . The prevailing tone is bright and hopeful, the kind of reading which helps all sorts and conditions of men. There is a fine literary flavour too, and above all and through all there is the true spirit of reverent devotion.'—Dr. A. E. Gregory, in *The Preacher's Magazine.*

'It is refreshing to open a book which does not drag us through the controversial quagmires of this age. Many a beautiful expression is encountered, and much really suggestive thought.'—*Homiletic Review.*

'All who purchase the volume will find in it much that is inspiring. It contains twenty chapters which show wide reading, considerable knowledge of life, and the power to put needful teaching in an attractive form.'—*Mansfield Chronicle.*

Charles H. Kelly, 25-35 City Road, and 26 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

And of all Booksellers